

AN
INQUIRY,
INTO THE
ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY
OF THE
LUES VENEREA;
WITH
OBSERVATIONS
ON ITS
INTRODUCTION AND PROGRESS
IN THE
ISLANDS OF THE SOUTH-SEAS.

To which is added,
A SHORT VIEW

THE VARIOUS REMEDIES

Recommended in that Distemper, from its first appearance in Europe to these Times: and a Method of Treatment suggested, by which the disagreeable and sometimes fatal Effects arising from an indiscriminate Use of Mercury are avoided.

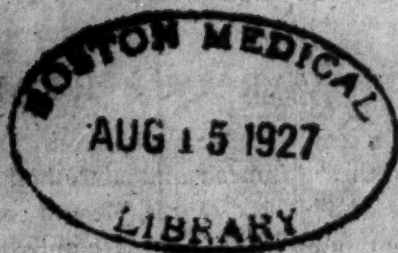
BY W. TURNBULL, A.M.
SURGEON TO THE EASTERN DISPENSARY.

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P R E F A C E.

THE following Sheets were never intended for publication, but written merely for the purpose of being read before a Medical Society in this Metropolis. Influenced by the flattering marks of attention with which they were received, together with the solicitations of some of my respectable friends, I have been induced to lay them before the Public, and submit to their candid and impartial examination,

It may probably appear extraordinary and unimportant, to revive the discussion of a subject so often a matter of debate, and in the opinion of most men now satisfactorily dismissed: and it may likewise seem superfluous in the eyes of many, to offer to the public inspection the history of a disease
which

which has been so amply treated of by Dr. Astruc, in his operose volume.—Had he been less prolix, and more connected and arranged, these observations would have never appeared: but the prolixity and abstruseness of this most elaborate and ingenious performance, have been the cause of its being little read or attended to.

It has been urged by some as an instance of the inutility of attending to the history of the Venereal, or of any other distemper—that admitting we possessed a perfect knowledge of its history, origin, &c. they would avail us very little in the method of cure, nor would they point out one superior to that we are at present acquainted with; and that instead of perplexing ourselves with new theories and new hypotheses on this subject, are better calculated for the ostentation of authors, than promoting and disseminating useful knowledge, it would serve more for general good, to attend to well established rules contain-

ing found practice, and better methods of curing diseases. Granting this to be in a great measure true, yet ignorance of the history of this distemper, as far as it is known, would be inexcusable in men who profess one of the most liberal and most extensive of the sciences; in which their knowledge cannot be too universal or diffused, were they to arrive at the age of an Antidiluvian, and possessed greater perseverance and abilities than commonly fall to the lot of man—all these would be insufficient to make them completely skilled in every branch of medicine, as it includes the whole circle of the Sciences—so limited, and so confined is human understanding.

But the history of the Venereal Disease cannot appear altogether so trivial, when we consider that the history of diseases is not an inconsiderable part of the history of human nature; and as an elegant modern
Writer

Writer * observes, “ Intimately connected
 “ with the progress of luxury, intempe-
 “ rance, and every other deviation from the
 “ simple laws of the animal œconomy.
 “ And, therefore, in ascertaining the period
 “ of the first appearance of any disease, but
 “ particularly of one which originates from,
 “ and tends to annihilate the very source of
 “ human existence, we make one impor-
 “ tant step, not only in the general history
 “ of the progress of manners, but even in
 “ the history of the world.”

Besides, there seems to be an innate propens-
 ity in man to search for causes, from
 seeing effects†; they are proportionally
 eager after causes, as they appear the
 more dark and inexplicable.

* Dr. Martin Wall, of Oxford.

† This axiom was evidently verified in the Lues
 Venerea; for on the appearance of that malady in our
 hemisphere, the attention of the ingenious and learned
 seemed to be totally absorbed in attempting to trace it
 to its fountain head, and explore its principal source.

This

This principle of curiosity may be called the soul of discovery ; without it, every improvement, every vestige of science would soon be enveloped in ignorance and superstition, and finally obliterated. When this spirit of excitement, this cement of society withdraws itself from kingdoms and empires, however polished, or however refined, they sink by degrees into their primeval state of rudeness and barbarism.

Had this publication been intended solely for the perusal of the medical reader, I might have been prompted to have entered more fully into the practical part * ; but I had in view as much the amusement of the private gentleman, as the information of those in the profession

* Did my inclination even lead me, it would now be superfluous to enlarge on this part of my subject ; for since this publication has been sent to the press, that very eminent and much experienced surgeon, Mr. Hunter, has favoured the world with a quarto, on the treatment of the Venereal Disease.

—who are, we may presume, possessed of an equal share of curiosity, and equally desirous to be made acquainted with the variety of conjectures and opinions formed by the most distinguished philosophers, historians, physicians, poets, and divines, relative to the nature and introduction of this destructive distemper, this pest of mankind.

It was my intention to have annexed to these observations a few experiments which I had made, in order to ascertain the effects of the Venereal Virus on different animals, but they seemed to me so unsatisfactory as not to merit attention. The experiments were made on the following animals, viz.—The dog, cat, and rabbit. From the result of these, it appeared that none of them were the least susceptible to the Venereal Poison, either when given into the stomach*, or applied to the organs
sub-

* The following accidental occurrence tends to elucidate the inferences drawn from the experiments
made

subservient to generation, or to incision made on any exterior parts of their bodies. Thence we may conclude that its effects are confined to man alone : he is the victim devoted for its rage. But why it is so, and the rest of the creation exempted from

made on the stomach of the above animals, and likewise to prove that neither the syphilitic or gonorrhœal virus has any effect upon the stomach of man.

In the year 1781, a Captain of the Navy (at Portsmouth) being under my care for a large Venereal Ulcer on the glans, accompanied with a considerable discharge from the urethra—his custom was frequently throughout the day, to bathe the parts with warm milk and water, in which he sometimes put a little spirits. A seaman waiting upon him one morning, and being placed in the room where the Captain had been in the evening before, and seeing a glass rummer half full of this mixture (which had been used for the purpose above-mentioned) and taking it for rum and milk, drank it off. About two hours after, my patient getting out of bed and inquiring after the milk and water—the sailor told him, with some hesitation, ‘ he hoped there was ‘ no harm, but that he had drank it.’ The Captain alarmed for the consequences, sent immediately for me ; I came in two hours after, and four from the accident, and ordered him a vomit, and never any thing disagreeable occurred.

them

xii P R E F A C E.

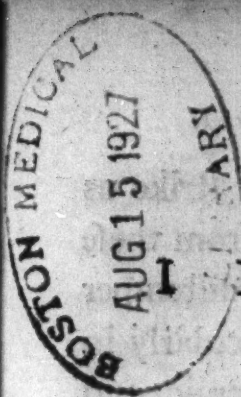
them, the utmost stretch of human investigation will probably never be able to discover.

In order, however, to render this dissertation more acceptable to the practitioner, and of greater utility, I have added a short history of the various remedies recommended from the period of the first appearance of the disease in Europe, to these times; and have thrown in some general observations on the different modes of treatment at present in vogue. These, I flatter myself, will not appear altogether unworthy of perusal, as they are the result of observation, and a pretty extensive experience;—my late situation in the Navy having afforded a large field for Venereal practice.

If I have, in any degree, been instrumental in exciting those who are better calculated to treat of my subject, in a more enlarged and extended scale, and whose geniuses are better adapted to the spirit of inquiry and investigation, the intention of these pages is fully accomplished.

A N





AN
INQUIRY
INTO THE
ORIGIN AND ANTIQUITY
OF THE
LUES VENEREA.

A VARIETY of opinions have prevailed in determining at what æra the Lues Venerea made its appearance in Europe; but it is now the general belief, that it was unknown in any European kingdom before the close of the fifteenth century; and was then imported from the islands adjacent to the Continent of South America, by some of the companions of Columbus; having been communicated to them at the period when that enterprising adventurer first explored that part of
B the

the world. Their accounts of it strike us with wonder and amazement; from these it appears, that it was a common distemper amongst those islands, but particularly in Hispaniola, where it was epidemic and contagious like the itch; and that it was in a manner hereditary to the natives, who not only contracted it by venery, but it likewise broke out spontaneously upon them; owing, as has been supposed by many Spanish authors of consequence, particularly Gonzalvo Fernandode Oviedo*, who resided many years among them, to proceed from their gross and intemperate manner of living, united to that sloth and inactivity, the natural effects of a hot climate. They further inform us, that they were in other respects a very healthy people; they seemed, agreeable to the accounts of a late celebrated writer †, to be every way exempt from many of the distempers which afflict civilized and po-

* Ovied. Hist. General. & Natural. de Ind. Occident.

† Robertson Hist. America, Vol. 2. Book viii.

lished nations. None of the maladies which are the immediate offspring of luxury ever visited them; and they had no names in their language, by which to distinguish this numerous train of adventitious misfortunes. That in return for the compliment they presented the Spaniards, were infected with the small-pox*, a disease considerably more disagreeable and destructive amongst them, than the Venereal Distemper ever was with us, even in its worst condition.

Previous to its being so universally distinguished in Europe, it had got some footing in Italy in 1493, but not raging rapidly was paid little attention to. Two years after, the memorable siege of Naples occurred, which gave it an opportunity of being more generally diffused throughout the French army, who were there waging

* Le Clerc, speaking of the Venereal Disease, observes, that the Spaniards, upon their first expedition to America, brought home from thence this infectious disorder, and soon after carried over another (the small-pox) of equal contagion, to whose rage, many Princes both of the Houses of Mexico and Peru fell a sacrifice.

war, headed by the victorious Charles VIII. against the combined forces of Spain and Naples; and at a very short period after, the infection was propagated to their neighbours on this side of the water. The reader will agree with me in observing, that the votaries of Venus have great reason to curse the fatal moment it first shed its baneful influence among them: happy would it have been for mankind, if the exuberant profusion with which the mines of Mexico and Peru pour forth their inexhaustible treasure, had been yet unexplored, millions of lives would have been preserved, and Europe, though perhaps in a more indigent state, would have remained ignorant of so direful a malady. Not only all Europe felt its destructive effects, but it soon urged its way into the remotest corners of Asia and Africa; and, in short, where man was, there it penetrated—* Even the lofty and consecrated walls

* So wicked, scandalous, and detestable, were the practices of the cloistered ecclesiastics, that in the days
of

walls of convents and nunneries, were unable to prevent its access; which led to such discoveries, as the secrecy of conventicle intrigue were anxious to conceal within the limits of their cloisters.—This seems to have been its routine of communication to the whole world. In the the earliest appearance of this distemper in Europe, the sufferings of the first victims were intolerably grievous; for, according to some ancient writers, it occasioned the hair and the nails to fall off, and produced other symptoms, so numerous and dreadful, as to to be unparalleled in history. It spread so universal a terror and consternation among all ranks of people, that the sick were suffered to perish alone,

of the beautiful but unfortunate Mary Queen of Scots, an Archbishop having frequently visited the inner apartments of a celebrated abbess, of her contracted a disease of so dreadful a nature, that his physicians pronounced it incurable.—To the skill of a famous Italian astrologer, who had brought a remedy for the disease from Tuscany, where it had first appeared, some years before, was the most reverend prelate indebted for a cure.

Vide de Vita Cardani.

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in such misery, as till that period they had been entirely unacquainted with; and the experience of the physicians furnished them with no remedy that could counteract its malignity. In the first breaking out of this distemper, as well as since, there were many who would not attend to reasoning on the subject; but took an infinite deal of pains to prove, that this disease was known both by the Greeks and Arabians; but imperfectly described under the names of difficult kinds of leprosies, exulcerations, and other cutaneous affections—Advocates for this mode of reasoning, may indeed shew us their great reading, but, at the same time, convince us of their want of discernment and attention; for let those that entertain the above opinion, peruse the cases related by Gaspar Torella, a celebrated physician of Valencia in Spain, who lived and practised at the first eruption of this contagious evil; and compare them with the symptoms of elephantiasis, which are so elegantly and accurately depicted by Aræteus and Hali Abbas, will find them
widely

widely different*. It is apparent to the least discerning, who have read with attention the works of the ancients, that there is not the same variety of appearances, the same complication of symptoms, in any one disease to which mankind is exposed, as in this: it was observed to be so peculiar in its nature, and so remarkable in every circumstance attending it, that the majority of the most learned and experienced practitioners, were convinced that it was a new disease; and one with which neither the Greek nor Arabian physicians were at all acquainted †. John

* “ *Lepra albedo est quæ in exterioribus fit acutis: & aliquando in quibusdam sine aliis est membris: non nunquam vero in toto fit corpore interdum ut totius fit corporis color albus. Quæ in membro est, si ex mala fit frigida complexione, hæc sunt signa; quum membrum in quo est, album est colore itidemque ejus pili; & si cutis phlebotomo vel certe acupungitur, sanguis ab eo non egreditur, sed humiditas alba.*”

Hali Abbas Theor. Cap. 16.

† The Jews and Mahometans, who were banished from Spain in the reign of Ferdinand and Isabella, introduced the Venereal Disease into Africa.

Leo, who wrote the History of Africa soon after this distemper was known in that quarter, makes mention, that the same notion prevailed there also; and in Barbary, its ravages spread with such uncontrollable force, that those who were so unhappy as to be afflicted, fell either victims to its violence, or, what is infinitely worse, lingered out the remainder of their wretched existence as spectacles of the greatest misery.

However, not to conceal any thing that has the least tendency to favor those, who imagine this distemper of more ancient date, they may find something to strengthen their hypothesis in Gordonius, who takes notice of pains and ulcers affecting the penis, together with buboes, which were often the consequence of promiscuous coition*: and Gulielmus de Saliceto, in speaking of a bubo, observes, “ cum accidit homini in virga corruptio, propter

* “ Jacere cum muliere, cujus matrix est immunda
“ plena sanie aut virulenta.”

Friend's Hist. Phys. Vol. II. p. 346.

“ con-

“ concubitum cum foeda muliere, aut ob
“ aliam causam, itaque corruptio multi-
“ plicatur & retinetur in virga: unde non
“ potest natura mundificare virgam aut
“ locum primo propter strictam viam illius
“ loci, unde redit, & regurgitat materia
“ ad locum inguinum propter habilitatem,
“ loci illius ad recipiendum superfluitatem
“ quamlibet, & propter affinitatem quam
“ habent hæc loca ad virgam *.”

This passage from Gordonius comes nearest to the point, of any we have met with, in favor of the antiquity of the Venereal Disease; as it appears that he lived in 1270, which was 223 years before it was known in Europe. The indefatigable and ingenious Dr. Astruc, has justly acquired the highest rank in his profession, and seems to have understood the nature and history of this distemper superior to any who ever wrote on the subject: in his elaborate volume, the opinions of all the writers on the Disease, from its earliest ap-

* Gul. de Saliceto Chirurg. Lib. I. Cap. 42.

De Apostemat. in Inguinibus.

pearance

pearance to his time, are there candidly stated.—He was of opinion, that both the Greeks and Romans were total strangers to it, and brings convincing and undeniable proofs to support his doctrine. It is evident (observes our admired author *) “ from the silence of all the physicians, “ historians, and poets, from the days of “ Hippocrates to the present, that no notice was taken of it:” and it is the more astonishing, as they were scrupulously accurate in describing every other the most trifling and minute disease that occurred in their times, should omit mentioning so remarkable, so direful, and so uncommon a distemper, if it had been so frequent among them, as for near three centuries it has been with us †. Even Rome

* Astruc, Book I. Chap. 1. on the Venereal Disease.

† Non in Europa innotuit ante 1493. Quia, 1. Neque à medicis, neque historicis, neque poeticis scriptoribus, ante hoc tempus, describitur. 2. Non est Lepra antiquorum. 3. Primi scriptores consentiunt quod morbus antea inauditus fuit. Non in Italia, certis causis concurrentibus, germinabat; neque à regionibus

Rome in her greatest luxury, at the time when she was outrivalling every other nation in dissipation, when her citizens were addicted to every sensual and inordinate gratifications, when they were entirely abandoned to all the excesses of unlawful pleasures, were unacquainted with this disease, or so prolific a subject would not have escaped the satiric pens of a Horace or a Juvenal. Some commentators, indeed, on the first mentioned poet, have considered the following passage as applicable to the Venereal Disease :

* ————— “ *Fœdâ cicatrix*
 “ *Setosam lævi frontem turpaverit oris*
 “ *Campanum in morbum in faciem permulta jo-*
 “ *catus.*”

but doubtless this is founded on conjecture. I am inclined to believe that the infamous disease of the Capuans (a people notorious for all manner of debaucheries

gionibus Africæ; sed ab Hispaniola cum Columbo ad-
vectus, bello Neapolitano se primò manifestabat.

Home's *Principia Medicinæ.*

* Horat. Lib. I. Sat. 5.

and

and disorderly pleasures) was no more than what is daily produced in consequence of too liberally sacrificing at the shrine of Bacchus; as it is no uncommon sight in these times, to see carbuncled faces amongst the votaries of that inebriating deity; and perhaps the foul scar on Messius Cicerrus's forehead, alluded to in the quotation, may have been occasioned from a similar cause. Others again, with more propriety, have supposed that he was hinting at a common cutaneous distemper in that climate, which the Romans called *Impetigo*, and is at this present day very prevalent in Italy.—Valesius too, imagined, that the scorbutic eruption on the face of the emperor Tiberius, as related by Tacitus; and the corroding ulcers of the prepuce and glans, the discharge of thin sanious matter from the urethra, the mortification and the cancer of the penis, &c.—all mentioned by Celsus, lib. vi. cap. 18. *De obscœnarum partium vitiis*; and described as obstinate diseases, and were modifications of our modern syphilitic complaints. But it is strange to conceive,

ceive, that every ulcer and running from those parts should be venereal—surely they are composed of the same materials, and liable to the same injuries, as every other part in the body; consequently subject to the same diseases independent of this cause. These passages, however, have been so variously interpreted, that it is impossible to draw any just or satisfactory conclusions relative to the true state of these diseases: but it is very apparent, from the majority of opinions, they do not bear greater marks of Venereal Distempers, than of many others, though they have been often produced as an argument in favor of its antiquity. Another remarkable circumstance may be brought forward, which helps further to expunge the idea, that it was known to the ancients—it having no particular name affixed to it* when it made its first entrance into Europe, but was looked upon as an anonymous distem-

* The natives of the Caribbee Islands called the disease Epian, which is of the same signification as diseased, distempered, or rotten.

per; each nation bestowing upon it, the name of the country they imagined they first received it from—we termed it the French-pox, because it was conjectured (how deservedly it is impossible to determine) that its first communication to this island was through them*. The variety of designations for the same distemper, puzzled and perplexed practitioners, that they were absolutely at a loss what name they should assign to it; it had not, however, received the appellation of French-pox till some time after the Neapolitan expedition. Some again have contended for its being known to Hippocrates, and attempt to produce passages from that divine old man, in order to prove their assertions. The disease which this prince of medicine speaks of, and which is described by him (in *Lib. Epidem. sect. 3.*) has in-

* However its most general name in Europe, on its first introduction, was the Neapolitan Disease, occasioned, no doubt, from its being more generally known and communicated to the inhabitants of different nations, collected together at the siege of that city.

deed some resemblance to the symptoms of the Lues Venerea; but the distemper he there makes mention of, was acute and epidemical, attended with a considerable degree of fever, occasioned from a hot and wet season, not uncommon in some parts of Greece; but the Venereal Disorder is chronical, peculiar to no seasons, comes on without febrile symptoms, and contracted only by coition. The plague of Athens, which raged, according to Thucydides, at a short period before the second Peloponnesian war, in its appearance, bears much the same description with the Lues Venerea; but that disease, which this celebrated Athenian historian takes notice of, disappeared of itself; what never or very rarely occurs in venereal affections, or was cured by quite different remedies, than what is commonly employed in these distempers. A moment's consideration must convince us, that this circumstance alone is sufficient to demolish this opinion: but when men are anxious, that the world should adopt their favorite doctrines, how-

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ever absurd and inconsistent, they have often ingenuity enough to provide themselves with a sufficient code of arguments to support their side of the question. The following fabulous account, taken from Herodotus, a celebrated historian, who flourished in the eighty-seventh Olympiad, has made some imagine, that the Scythians were acquainted with the Venereal Disease, and by them disseminated through half the globe, some hundred years before the expedition to America in 1492; which, from its peculiarity and eccentricity, we cannot omit inserting it in this Inquiry.—The Scythians, an enterprising, spirited people, remarkable for their prowess in military affairs, made an irruption into Palestine, where they plundered and destroyed the temple at Ascalon, erected in honor of Venus Urania. The commission of this sacrilegious action, incensed the Goddess so much, that she inflicted on the despoilers of her temple, and their posterity, a distemper which they termed *θηλειαν υεσον*: and that such as laboured under this complaint were called by

by the Scythians *εναπιας* or execrable *.—
The above quotation from this Greek author, has been produced as favouring the antiquity of the Venereal Disease; and as a further proof of this, it has been alledged by many, but particularly John de Laet, (who wrote a large folio *De Origine Gentium Americanarum*) that the same customs were observed to prevail among the native Americans, when discovered, as were practised by the Scythians; “ which makes it a matter of doubt, (says this writer) but that these people had communication with America and its islands, long previous to its discovery by Columbus.” But these are matters of fiction, the offspring of speculative and luxuriant imagination, and by no means deserve our attention.

Innumerable are the texts of scripture brought forward in order to ascertain its antiquity. The sacred, as well as profane writings, have been ransacked and misconstrued in favor of these hypothetical doctrines. The boils of Job, and the pains in

* Astruc, ch. i. b. i.

David's bones, have been supposed venereal, but without the least foundation; although some inimical to revelation, have endeavoured to leave a blot on the memory of these good and illustrious men. The learned Josephus, the celebrated Jewish historian, makes no mention of this disease: if such a one had been common in his time, it would not readily have escaped the penetrating genius of that much admired author. Many of the moderns imagine Job's complaints to have been the small-pox; but this is merely imaginary, as his distemper was of too long duration for that malady. Several divines have viewed it more in a figurative or allegorical sense, than as a corporeal affliction; this last opinion seems to be most consistent with revealed religion, consequently our attempts, either to investigate or determine of what nature the complaints were, which it pleased the Divine Being to inflict him with, must appear at the same time presumptuous, and highly absurd to every rational

tional observer. Dr. Mead* supposed that it was cuticular, “ for it is certain (says he) that the bodies of the Hebrews were very liable to foul ulcers of the skin from time immemorial; upon which account, many learned men are of opinion, that they were forbid the use of swine’s flesh, which, as it affords gross nourishment, and not easily carried off by the skin, is very improper food for such constitutions: wherefore the hotter the countries were in which they inhabited, such as the Deserts of Arabia, the more severely the disease raged. And authors of other nations, who despised the Jews, say, that it was upon this account they were driven out of Egypt, lest the leprosy, a disease very common amongst them, should spread over the country: and perhaps it was a species of this distemper which had affected the body of this virtuous man.” —From the symptoms which he complains of, as described in the quotations

* Mead’s *Medica sacra*.

referred to below *, and considering that the Jews were much subjected to the leprosy, it seems more likely to have been this distemper, than the small-pox, if we are determined, at all events, to give him a *bodily disease*.

The idea of this emblem of patience's disease being a species of our modern venereal complaints, was very much credited by many countries professing the Roman Catholic persuasion. They were of opinion, that the venereal distemper deduced its origin from Job, and for this reason, we are informed, that a missal was printed at Venice, in 1542, wherein it was enacted, that mass should be said in honor of Job, by those recovered of this disease, as being supposed to owe their deliverance to his intercession, and one who had suffered the same calamity.

It is surprising, that the people of those times should have carried their credulity so far; nor is it easy to conceive, how that ill-founded and superstitious opinion

* Job ii. 7. and chap. vii. 5.

could

could prevail, at least, amongst men of understanding; as there is no such affinity between the disease of Job, as described by Mead, and the texts of scripture alluded to, and the venereal disease, sufficient to establish so outree a doctrine; for all the symptoms of Job's complaints, which are there mentioned, are only general, and common to every disease of the ulcerous kind.

With respect to the disease of David, as he himself has represented to us in Psalm xxxviii. 3 and 7, it appears to be more a disease of the mind than body; which is very demonstrable when he says, "there is no soundness of his flesh, because of the anger of God:" and it ought therefore not to be taken in a literal sense, as relating to complaints of an infirm sickly body, but the torture of a grieved and penitent mind. But granting, that when David wrote the verses quoted, he really was afflicted with a corporeal disease, and that the complaints he there mentions, related wholly to it, it

does not thence follow, that it was venereal; for it is believed, agreeable to the sacred history, that David was a man much addicted to the gratification of the most criminal passions; and one of his most predominant, and most excusable, seems to have been the love of women; and no doubt an excessive use of them, will occasion dreadful complaints to attack the generative powers independent of any venereal taint, as to create pains in the bones, and other symptoms, which the Jewish Monarch complains of; and debilitate the procreative faculties in such a manner, as to be rendered so totally incapable of retaining the secreted semen, that there must ensue a constant dripping upon the least incitement of that fluid through the urethra—the relaxant and painful consequences of this needs no comment, as it must be obvious to every one the least conversant in the animal œconomy. —We have to lament, that affections of this kind, and brought on by the same cause,

cause, do too frequently occur in these more effeminate days*. If this construction is admitted, the arguments of our opponents are confuted, and must fall to the ground: though some have taken a great deal of pains, and laboured very assiduously, to throw a stigma on these two venerable characters; but the falsity of their assertions is evidently demonstrated: as the symptoms which Job, and the royal Psalmist complain of, do not correspond sufficiently with the Lues Veneræ, as to support so unaccountable an idea.

With as little reason can the issue of the flesh, and the habitual emission of seed, so often mentioned in the vth and xvth chapters of Leviticus, be applied to this disease: for if we consider only the days of separation which are enjoined, we may plainly see what is there meant, could not possibly be this distemper. And besides, we know that even a simple gon-

* Dr. Tissot on Onanism,

norrehea, and the menstrea *, were looked upon in all eastern countries as having some impurity, and even contagion about them; therefore the Mosaic legislator lays them under the same restriction with the lepers.

Mr. William Becket, our ingenious countryman, was one of the last persons of any consequence, who denied the Venereal Disease being of a modern date, and attempted to defend its antiquity, in the London Philosophical Transactions of 1718. He produced *those* three papers, and took an infinite deal of pains to col-

* The law under the Mosaic dispensation, forbid those who had commerce with women, during the period of their menstruation, to appear in public, or to enter the tabernacle of the congregation, until they brought voluntary offering for their ablution and purification. Until this was performed they were accounted legally unclean, and severely, though not capitally, amenable if convicted of a neglect herein.

The divine Legislator, no doubt, enacted this moral rite, to avoid the many diseases which such impure proceedings were pregnant with, particularly in those hot countries through which the children of Israel passed.

lect

lect every argument which ingenuity could invent, or could be adduced in favor of his opinion; especially from the accounts handed down, concerning a disease called the Arfura, or *perilous infirmitie* of Brenning, defined by John Ardern, an eminent English surgeon, to be a certain inward heat and excoriation of the urethra. The causes of these symptoms may easily be accounted for, and is nearly coeval with the incontinencies of mankind; for men otherwise in perfect health, who are unguarded in their amours, and promiscuously have connection with every woman they meet, (comparatively speaking) and in all probability with some, who may be labouring under the fluor albus*, or many other

* It would be highly commendable, in every practitioner, when consulted in any discharge from those parts, to be particularly tender in not too rashly giving his opinion relative to their nature, where married people are concerned, without deliberately weighing every circumstance. An unattention to this, united to ignorance or neglect in distinguishing venereal gonorrhœas, from those arising from other stimuli

other discharges of an acrid nature, must lay their accounts to expect frequently

stimuli, have too frequently been, to my certain knowledge, the irremediable cause of destroying the peace and harmony of many a worthy and virtuous pair. We have here attempted to point out the criteria, by which we are enabled to distinguish the difference between the two diseases.—First, The suddenness of the appearance of the discharge, occasioned by other stimuli than venereal, being most commonly in twenty-four hours, and seldom longer than forty-eight, after coition. Secondly, By the shortness of its duration, seldom continuing longer than a period of seven or eight days, and often disappearing entirely in two or three, without the application of any remedy whatever.—The following interesting medical fact tends to illustrate and establish the above rules.

A gentleman of my particular acquaintance, having connection with a lady (whom he lived with for some time in habits of intimacy) at a time she was afflicted with the fluor albus, to a very violent degree; the consequence was, in twenty-four hours after being with her, he was seized with an excoriation all over the glans penis, and an oozing out of matter, attended with a puriform discharge from the urethra, and other symptoms of virulent gonorrhœa.—These appearances astonished him greatly; for being confident of his own constancy, and no less so of the honor

contracting in those parts a whole train of appearances, such as heats, scalding in making water, inflammations, &c,—therefore the Arfura which Becket speaks of is not venereal, but merely the consequence of inflammation, which will produce all the above assemblage of symptoms, from the application of any stimulus (sufficiently

honor and integrity of his female friend, did not therefore apply to any surgeon, but waited the event, only bathing the parts frequently with warm milk and water, with no other intention than to keep them clean. Which treatment, together with religiously avoiding any intercourse with one another, he was relieved in the space of a few days, from a state of great suspense and uneasiness.—From this narrative two questions may naturally be started—Would this gentleman, on being connected with a woman in health, in this situation, be the instrument of infecting her with a disease similar to that with which he was affected? If so—may not the Venereal Disease have sprung à priori from some such analogous affection?

Were we to admit of this proposition, (which we by no means consent to) the Venereal Disease must have existed in the earliest periods in every quarter of the world, and capable continually of producing itself.

powerful) to the mucus membrane of the urethra.

The learned Dr. Friend was of this opinion, and in confirmation of it observes, " That such appearances may occur from conversing with women who, without having the Venereal Disease, are afflicted with ulcers and imposthumations on those parts. This may easily account for the putrifaction of the genitals, which the celebrated John of Gaunt died of, and the Brenning so often mentioned in our English history. But what our old physicians and John Ardern have suggested upon the last head, is all taken from the Arabians; who, in any excoriation, or ulcer on the penis or vagina, mention the heat of urine, which the translators of them often call *Ardor*, *Arfura*, and *Incendium*, and accordingly prescribe a great variety of injections for these complaints *."

* *Histor. Physic. vol. ii. p. 355, octavo edition.*

By

By Dr. Friend's account we may understand, that this Arfura was not a disease peculiar to this country, as has been repeatedly asserted, but common also to the Arabians. It is not necessary here to collect all Mr. Becket's authorities in favor of his theory, nor indeed will the limits of this publication admit of it, we shall therefore content ourselves with laying before you a few of the most distinguished.

One of his testimonies is taken from the manuscript rules and ordinaries of the stewes, that were by public authority allowed to be kept in the Borough of Southwark, and are supposed to have been drawn up about the year 1430—one of which is expressed in the following manner.
“ Of those who keep women, having a
“ wicked infirmitie, and orders under a severe penalty, that no stew-holder keep noo
“ woman wythin his house that hath any
“ sycknesse of Brenning.”—Another of his later authorities is produced from an old publication, titled the supplication of beggars,
and

and presented by one Simon Fish (a zealous promoter of the Reformation) to Henry the VIIIth, in which, speaking of the dissolute and debauched life which the priests at that time led, he observes, "These
 " be they who corrupt the whole generation of mankind in your realm, that
 " catch the pockes of one woman and
 " bear to another*." Though the authorities which Mr. Becket brings forward in favor of this doctrine, are both curious and well attested, yet, when we consider the disease he alludes to in the first article, (the Brenning) may be generated in any country, and at any period. With regard to the authenticity of the last authority, no one, I imagine, doubts, or presumes to deny, even the non-assertors of the antiquity of the Lues Venerea; and am therefore much surprised at Mr. Becket's producing this in favor of it, as, according to my idea, it greatly injures his hypothesis; for, consonant to the accounts of several writers of eminence,

* Astruc, vol. i. p. 52.

venereal

venereal complaints were perfectly characterized, and well known in the time of Henry the VIIIth *, and first made their appearance at Bristol † in 1498, eleven years before this monarch began his reign. To those who with impartial and unbiassed judgment reflect on the above historical facts, the misapplication and futility of Mr. Becket's testimonies will appear evident, and unable to confute the best grounded opinion, that the disease is of modern date, and perfectly unknown in Europe, before it was introduced by Columbus's Fleet in 1493 ‡.

The

* The following observation from Hume, the prince of modern historians, vol. iv. Hist. of Henry the VIIIth, as a further confirmation of this report — “ Among the charges against Cardinal Woolsey, “ it is remarkable, that his whispering in the king's “ ear, knowing himself to be affected with venereal “ distempers, is an article against him.” See p. 162, quart. edit.

† Vid. Lock's Miscellanies.

‡ A very strong additional proof, that the Lues Venerea did not appear in Europe before this period, is the silence of Buchanan, who in his satire on the Franciscans,

The most eminent amongst the moderns, who have treated of the Venereal

Franciscans, wrote at Guipuscoa in Spain, which is universally allowed to be the justest delineation of the clerical vices of that age, whilst every species of impurity, irregular, carnal indulgencies, dissolute effeminacy, and every kind of intercourse *nudi cum nudis*, is pourtrayed in the most glowing colours.—But their direful effects, the Lues Venerea, the dreadful scourge of unlawful pleasures, is not mentioned. Though this poem was wrote ann. 1538, we find that the Venereal Disease was not even at so late a date generally known throughout every remote part of Europe.

Vid. Buchani vita à se ipso scripta.

Another decisive evidence of the above is—that the Venereal Disease was unknown in Russia before the reign of Peter the Great; and the reason assigned for its appearing then, in that unlimited empire, is this; that till that period, the traffic carried on by the Russians, did not require much communication or dealings with foreigners. But after that enterprising and indefatigable Emperor had taken the resolution to visit other parts of Europe, and at the same time had sent many subjects abroad to learn trades and manufactories; these carried back with them, to their native soil, though improved and polished in their manners, the seeds of this dire, this fashionable contagion.

Vid. Mead's Works, Vol. II. and Voltaire's Hist. of the Czar of Moscovy.

Disease, are the Doctors Boerhaave and Sydenham; the latter of these luminaries of medicine, supposed that the Venereal Disease was not an original one in Hispaniola, or any of the other West-India islands, but that it was imported thither by the negroes, whom the Spaniards carried from the Coast of Guinea, to their American settlements, and that amongst them it was a common distemper. But this disease, which the Doctor mentions as carried over by the savage Africans to the West-Indies, is more likely to have been the Yaws, a distemper very general amongst them, and seems to be indigenous to Africa and Arabia *. But from the authority of that

* There is a species of this African Endemic very prevalent in the Western parts of Scotland, distinguished by the inhabitants under the name of *Sibbins*. A practitioner of the Shire of Galloway informed me, that it is often communicated by the kiss, without any other freedom passing between the sexes, but more frequently indeed by coition; and that the same mode of cure which is observed to be of service in the former disease, is pursued with great success in this. Dr. Gilchrist, in speaking of it, relates, that the spreading

that very correct and judicious historian, Dr. Robertson *, we are led to believe,

of it is chiefly owing to the neglect of cleanliness; and seems to think, that by a due attention to that virtue it might be extirpated.—If cleanliness is required as an assistant to the cure of any disease, it must be eminently so in the Lues Venerea. Advocates for this virtue go even so far as to imagine, that a proper attention to it will cure a recent infection, independant of any other application. However just this assertion may be, I shall not dispute; but it is a fact well authenticated, that in many Oriental Countries, and in particular Persia, where ablution is considered as a religious ceremony, this distemper is not attended with those baneful and pernicious consequences as it is in Europe.—Indeed the mildness of the Venereal Disease among the Persians, may be partly owing to the salubrity of the climate, as well as to their frequent use of the warm bath when afflicted with that malady.

* “ The impossibility of carrying on any improvement in America, unless the Spanish planters could command the labour of the natives, was an insuperable objection to *Las Casas* of treating them as free subjects. In order to provide some remedy for this, without which he found it was in vain to mention his scheme, he proposed to purchase a sufficient number of negroes from the Portuguese settlements on the Coast of Africa, and to transport them to America, in order that they might be employed as slaves in working the mines, and cultivating the ground.

that the sagacious Sydenham has been greatly mistaken in this matter. For the Venereal Disease, as we have endeavoured to prove, was contracted by the Spaniards in 1492; and, agreeable to Dr. Robertson's accounts, no slaves were transported from Africa to their West-India possessions before 1503. But how the British Hippocrates could argue in favour of so inconsistent a doctrine, must appear to every one astonishing, as it is directly contrary to historical facts. Unless it can be proved, that the natives of Africa had communication with the Americans before its discovery by Columbus, which we have

"ground. One of the first advantages which the
"Portuguese had derived from their discoveries in
"Africa, arose from the trade in slaves. Various
"circumstances concurred in reviving this odious
"commerce, which had been long abolished in Europe, and which is no less repugnant to the feelings
"of humanity, than to the principles of religion.
"As early as the year 1503, a few negroe slaves had
"been sent into the New World. In the year 1511,
"Ferdinand permitted the importation of them in
"great numbers."

Hist. Americ. book iii. vol. i. p. 225.

great reason to believe they had not, at least we are acquainted with no writer that ever has advanced the contrary.

The English translator of Boerhaave's Aphorisms, in speaking of the Lues Venerea, observes *, " It may be true what Sydenham asserts, that the name of the disease was not known in Europe before it was brought from Guinea; but it is amazing, that either he or Boerhaave, or any unprejudiced lover of truth, and men of candid reasoning in all other matters, should so far be blinded as to believe this disease of a modern date, and not to know its true features, in a great many passages of the ancients, both sacred and profane: and I am much surprized, that nobody has taken any notice of the following plain passage out of Plutarch, in Otho's life, in my opinion past all cavalling; which, had our author or Sydenham observed, it is impossible but men of their candour and equity would have altered theirs."—

* Vid. Boerhaave's Aphorisms, paragraph 1446, on the Venereal Disease.

" Nothing

“ * Nothing gained or gratified the people
“ more, than Otho’s justice in relation to
“ Tigillinus, who was a person not only
“ actually punished by the very apprehen-
“ sion of punishment, which the whole
“ city required as a just debt, but
“ with several diseases too, that he con-
“ tracted by conversing with lewd wo-
“ men; and though the ill consequences
“ to which this course of life exposed him,
“ were generally looked upon as punish-
“ ment enough, yet the people thought
“ life itself too great for him to enjoy,
“ who had been the cause of so many
“ men’s destruction.” But this passage
does not certify the antiquity of the Ve-
nereal Disease, more than others we have
had occasion to quote. The translator
seems to be as far from convincing us
of the antiquity of the Venereal Disease,
as Sydenham was in asserting, that it
was first communicated to the Spaniards
by the inhabitants of Guinea. The dis-
temper of Tigillinus, which Plutarch

* Vid. Putarch on Otho’s Life.

speaks of as produced from unrestrained connections with dissolute women, is not to be wondered at; for when we consider the debauched course of life this Roman pursued, whom according to Tacitus, was addicted to the most vile and brutal gratifications, from such an abandoned existence, a train of diseases consequently must have been the issue, equal, if not superior in virulence to the Lues Venerea, but exempted from its infectious tendency; in short, such a complaint as I have taken notice of in a former part of these observations*.

Rhazes (in his *Continent*) speaks of a disease of the penis, as a very common occurrence in Persia, and particularly at Bagdad, where he practised in great eminence.—Viz. Ulcers on the penis, brought on by a particular mode of coition—*Ascensio supra mulieris virum*. Advocates for the antiquity of the Venereal Disease, have fondly imagined that it hints at this distemper. But no one, I conceive, would be so absurd, as to support this notion, or argue that Rhazes thought it what

* Vid. p. 25.

we now term Venereal; or that such an attitude was capable of producing this virus. The absurdity and inconsistency of reasoning after this manner, must appear obvious; as to imagine that every ulcer in this part was Venereal, and could proceed from no other cause, or that even a gonorrhœa was always the inseparable attendant of impure coition.

As we have now briefly considered those opinions of the ancients, which are most worthy of our observation, relative to the antiquity, &c. of the Venereal Disease, we shall next follow it to a clime, where it has been, of late, unfortunately disseminated, and which has opened a new field for fresh sources of dispute, both to the learned and curious.

Amongst the first of these, stand deservedly eminently, that ingenious naturalist, Dr. Forster—to whom the world is so much indebted for his great discoveries on that pleasing and instructive branch of science, and for his late observations on the æra of

the Origin and Antiquity of the Lues Venera in the South Sea Islands, and on the period of its appearance in Europe. In favour of his theory, he reproduces Mr. William Becket's arguments, (which we have canvassed pretty fully in a former part of this treatise) by which he attempts to convince us, that the Venereal Disease is of more ancient date than many preceding writers have alledged, by tracing its origin in those Islands, and in Europe, to the remotest times; deducing it from natural causes, which have subsisted from a very early period in history. He begins with observing, that when Captain Cook left Otaheite, in the year 1769, many of his crew were infected with the Venereal Disease; they at that time suspected that the crew of Mons. de Bougainville, the celebrated French circumnavigator, had communicated this disease to the inhabitants of the Society Islands.—From this nation being oftener censured with propagating this disease, than any other in Europe, we are led to the following exclamation

mation—O! thrice unhappy country, for having so frequently been the supposed medium of communicating this horrid distemper to the sons of men; but more especially in the present case, by so recently entailing it upon the innocent natives of the South Seas. For all the advantages they have, or ever may receive; all the attempts to enrich them with new species of vegetables and animals, cannot in any degree compensate for the introduction of this evil, this scourge of mankind.—“ But Mons. Bougainville, in return, suspects, the English, in the Dolphin, to have first introduced it; and the Gentlemen of the Dolphin assert, they never had one man infected with Venereal complaints whilst they were at Otaheite, or immediately afterwards*.

The following declaration of a friend of mine (whose veracity might be relied on) tends in a great measure to expiate our countrymen from so heavy a charge.—

* Observations made, during a voyage round the world, by John Reynolds Forster, LL.D. p. 488.

That

.. That at that period, the disease was very prevalent in Otaheite, and that few of the ships company, that had commerce with the women of that Island, escaped it; and that the natives repeatedly affirmed, they had received the infection from Bougainville's crew, who visited them at the interval between Capt. Cooke's first and second voyage. But still it remains to me a matter of doubt, whether the first infection sprung from the French or English; for these Islands were visited by both nations nearly about the same period; and each country seems willing to throw the odium, of introducing it upon the other.—Amongst the many and ingeninous arguments which Dr. Foster produces in favor of his hypothesis, the following demands our most particular attention and strictest examination.—“ There is great reason to believe, “ that the Venereal Disease has not lately “ been introduced into these Islands, but was “ known there for a long time; especially “ as a young man, a native of Bolobola, “ who went with us to Oraceidea, acquainted

“ quainted us that this evil was very com-
“ mon there, where, however, no Euro-
“ pean ship had ever visited at that time;
“ nay, he informed us that his mother fell
“ a victim to the disease, before the arrival
“ of any Europeans in those Isles, &c*.”

This narration serves greatly to support his argument; and if it possibly could be relied on, must go a great way to make us proselytes to his opinion: though I should start at the idea, even in harbouring a doubt of the Doctor's veracity.—But when we consider that his information was received from a native, who must have been a person, as it is natural to imagine, totally unqualified to form any satisfactory opinion concerning the appearances of a disease, or possessed such a stock of medical discernment, as to render him capable of investigating or distinguishing the leprosy, or several other analogous complaints indigenous to those Islands, from Venereal distempers, as the differences of these diseases has afforded matter of great dispute, and puzzled many, the most emi-

* Forster's Observations, &c.

ment amongst us.—It will not then create any astonishment in us, if an uncultivated inhabitant of the southern hemisphere, should mistake the one disease for the other; therefore to admit of this doctrine, we must be possessed of a great share of credulity.—In order to leave a scope for the mind to employ itself, we shall propose the two following questions for its discussion.—May not this disease, which the young Bolobolean's mother died of, been a species of leprosy * or some herpetic complaint, so common

* This disease, or one which bears a strong resemblance of it, is very predominant among the natives of the Pacific Ocean; and is particularly described to be so (by Capt. Cook) at Hamoo, Vavaoo, and Feejee, three of the Friendly Islands.—Symptoms—It appears in every part of the body, in large broad ulcers, discharging a thin clear pus, some of which had a very virulent appearance in the face, and is generally attended with the loss of the nose, or a considerable part of it.—It cannot be in consequence of Venereal contagion, although there is a great analogy between the symptoms; for it is not the result of Venereal intercourses, but arises spontaneously, and seems to be indigenous to the climate.—Appearances, similar to the above, owe their origin to drinking infusions of the *ava*, (a very hot root,) which

common in tropical countries? Or allowing it, for a moment, to have been Venereal—may it not have been a distemper indigenous in these Islands, as well as it was reported to have been in Hispaniola, and the other West-India Islands? and not originated from libidinous excesses, and promiscuous unrestrained intercourses with one another, as he asserts.—I certainly

which constitute the common beverage of these Islands. —“ The destructive effects of this vegetable, observes
 “ Capt. Cook, was so very visible, to many of us who
 “ had visited these Islands before, that we were sur-
 “ prised to find several of the natives, who were re-
 “ markable for their size and corpulency when we saw
 “ them last, now almost reduced to skeletons; and the
 “ cause of this alteration was universally attributed to
 “ the use of the *ava*. Their skins were dry, rough,
 “ and covered with scales, which, they say, occasionally
 “ fall off, and their skins become, in some degree, re-
 “ newed. As an excuse for this baneful practice, they
 “ alledge, it is to prevent their growing too corpulent;
 “ but it enervates them exceedingly, and probably
 “ shortens the duration of their lives.”—Were we to
 allow ourselves a moment’s thought on the history of
 this assemblage of diseases, we cannot but easily discover
 the fallacy of Dr. Forster’s conclusions.—Vid. Cook’s
 last Voyage abridged, Vol. II. p. 97.

must

must acquiesce with him, that there is a probability of the Venereal Disease's existing ages in these Islands, previous to their discovery by Europeans—but the Doctor must excuse me, if I differ from him in his theory, relative to the causes, which he says will produce the Disease.—Having advanced thus far, he ventures still farther and endeavours to shew, that the disorder in question was not introduced into Europe by Columbus; and did not even then, as it is generally supposed, make its first appearance about the period of that important event, but was long before distinctly characterised, and familiarly known. To establish this doctrine, he has recourse to old opinions, and quotes the ingenious enquiries made by *Monf. Sanchez Ribero* *, a physician

* *Monf. Sanchez Ribero*, published a Dissertation in the year 1765, in which he endeavours to prove that this Disease was not introduced from America, but took its rise in Europe, and was brought on by an epidemical and malignant disorder. Did I chuse to enter into a disquisition on this subject, which I should not have mentioned if it had not been intimately connected with this part of my enquiry, it would not be difficult to point

fician in Russia, who says, that the Venereal Disease appeared in Italy, and at Auvergne in France, at the very time when Columbus returned to Spain, from his Discoveries in America. But these reports are very little to be attended to, for very evident and obvious reasons; they cannot be sufficiently ascertained.—If the learned supporter of this opinion could inform us, whether there were any Italians and French, natives of Auvergne in the Columbian expedition? If there were, the Venereal Distemper appearing as soon in *Auvergne*, and in *Italy* as it did in Spain, even allowing that this really was so, may soon be accounted for. As it is but natural to imagine, that point out some mistakes with respect to the facts, upon which he founds, as well as some errors in the consequences which he draws from them. The rapid communication of the Disease from Spain over Europe, seems to resemble the progress of an epidemic, rather than that of a disease transmitted by infection. The first mention of it is in the year 1493, and before the year 1497, it had made its appearance in most countries of Europe, with such alarming symptoms, as rendered it necessary for the civil magistrate to interpose in order to check its violence.—

Robertson's America, Note 48. p. 464. Vol. I.

the

the sailors of these two kingdoms would be anxious to return to their respective habitations as soon as leave could be granted them, after so long and so remarkable a voyage, and carrying the distemper with them, would infect those females whom they unfortunately connected with; and the distance being so short between Spain and those countries, and the difference of time would be so small, that it would require the most accurate and eagle-eyed observer to decide, whether the seeds of the disease were not as soon sown in France and Italy, as they were in Spain.

—"It appears" (continues the Doctor in favor of his hypothesis) "from a book
 " of Peter Pintor *, a learned Spanish
 " physician, that the Venereal Disease
 " raged at Rome, that it spread over all
 " Italy in the form of an epidemical dis-
 " temper in the year 1493. Pacificus
 " Maximus, a celebrated poet, whose
 " works were published at Florence in
 " 1489, describes, in lib. 3. ad Priapum,

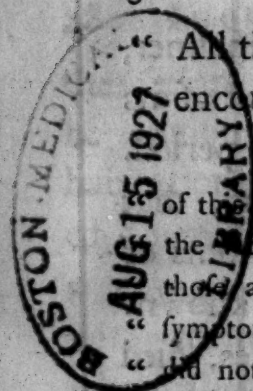
* Forster's Observations, p. 492.

" the

“ the Venereal Disease in such a manner,
 “ that no doubt can be ascertained of its
 “ being perfectly known at that period.
 “ Nor are there testimonies wanting, that
 “ in times still more remote, symptoms of
 “ the Venereal Disease were well known.
 “ Alfonsus, the first King of Naples, died
 “ in 1458, of a gonorrhœa, or as Tristano
 “ Caraciola de veritate fortunæ expresses it,
 “ *morbo insuper immundo pertinaci, in*
 “ *voluntario scilicet insensibilique, spermatis*
 “ *fluxu.* Ladislaus, another Neapolitan
 “ Monarch, likewise died in 1414, of an
 “ infection in his genitals, contracted from
 “ a girl whom he kept. More instances
 “ can be produced to convince us that the
 “ disease had been known among the an-
 “ cients, and are to be found in Platner’s
 “ Opuscula, de Morbo Campano, p. 2*.
 “ All

* As my own sentiments entirely coincide with those
 of the ingenious Dr. Wall, concerning the diseases of
Alfonsus and *Ladislaus*, it would be but doing justice to
 that Gentleman, to give you an abstract of them.—

“ That Alfonsus, King of Naples, died of a venereal
 “ gonorrhoea in the year 1485, is an assertion with-
 “ out any plausible foundation of truth—A circumstance



" All these suggestions (continues the Dr.)
 " encourage me to suppose that the Ve-
 " nereal
 " of this nature, rendered notorious by the high rank of
 " the victim, must have been so well known, that
 " those authors, who have treated of this Venereal
 " symptom, could not have presumed to assert, that it
 " did not make its appearance till the more common
 " symptoms of the Lues had been well known for more
 " than twenty years; nay, till the virulence with which
 " they had made their first invasion, was considerably
 " mitigated and corrected. Carraciolo only says, that
 " Alfonso was destroyed, morbo immundo, involun-
 " tario scilicet & insensibili spermatis fluxu. But this
 " proves no more than that his disorder was a seminal
 " weakness, and a species of the Tabes Dorsalis, or
 " Gonorrhoea *Overspyros**. The Venereal Gonorrhoea, is
 " neither spermatis fluxus, nor is it a discharge without
 " pain, *insensibilis*.—Even this account of the cause
 " and manner of this Prince's death is, after all, very
 " weakly founded. It must be owned, that no one who
 " plunges into libidinous luxury, is exempt from its
 " debilitating effects, which generally lay the founda-
 " tion of corporeal and mental imbecility, and very
 " often cut short the thread of life; whereas Alfonso
 " lived to a considerable age, passed no small part of his
 " life in the active engagements of the camp and the
 " field; and in his declining years, governed his united
 " dominions of Arragon, Sicily, and Naples, with such

* Sauvages Nosolog. Cl. ix. Ord. 3. Gen. xxx. Sp. 3. et Cl. x.
 Ord. 1. G. 1. Sp. 1.

" pur-

“ Venereal Disease was not uncommon in
 “ ancient times, as has been repeatedly
 “ urged;
 “ prudence and prosperity, as to have obtained from
 “ historians the title of great. Nor do they in general
 “ make any mention that he was subject to any natural
 “ or acquired infirmity of body or mind *.

“ That Ladislaus, King of Naples, died of a Venereal
 “ disorder, is not less disputable than the former asser-
 “ tion. In the account given of him in the Diction-
 “ naire Historique Portatif, it is said, “ Il mourut a
 “ Naples le 16 Août 1414, à 38ans d’un poison, que
 “ la fille d’un medecin lui avoit, donné a Perouse,”—
 “ a mode of expression extremely inaccurate, and not
 “ to be hazarded by a biographer, if he really died of a
 “ Venereal disorder. Had that been the case, the
 “ writer would have been either more or less explicit
 “ than he is. If he was willing to conceal the misfor-
 “ tune or disgrace of the King, he was not required to
 “ say so much; if that Prince really died of this dis-
 “ order, and the author was desirous of perpetuating
 “ the memory of that event, he would not have expref-
 “ sed himself in terms so ambiguous.—But the history
 “ of Ladislaus supports the author’s hypothesis, with more
 “ plausibility than that of Alfonso; because historians
 “ agree that the Ladislaus, delivered from enemies at
 “ home, and an over-match for those abroad, gave
 “ himself up to pleasure, and shortened his days by ex-
 “ cess of debauchery. It is most probable; however,
 “ that the prejudicial consequences of these excesses,

* Swinburne’s Travels through the two Sicilies, p. 22.

“ urged ; that it, however, broke out with
 “ new rage about the year 1493, and that
 “ fixing and attaching itself upon many
 “ other epidemical distempers, it became
 “ led him to have recourse to medicine, and to entrust
 “ himself to the care of every empiric, who was base
 “ enough to flatter him with the perfect restoration of
 “ his debilitated frame ; and that to one or more of the
 “ pretended restoratives, thus administered by the hand
 “ of empiricism, he finally became a victim.”

Vid. Dr. WALL's Observations, &c.

The judiciousness of this ingenious Gentleman's remarks is very apparent ; for it is certain, that a promiscuous use of women, attended with other irregularities, as we have before had repeated occasions to mention, will create symptoms similar to those, of these two Monarchs, allowing their diseases to have been what they are alledged ; and therefore I cannot avoid cordially joining with him in rejecting this false idea, which has long been prevalent—that the disease was anciently known in Europe. On the contrary, that it is a distemper of modern date, and not introduced here before the conclusion of the 15th century. Such notion as this will be best refuted by the history of this distemper, when we consider that *Gonorrhœa virulenta**, did not make its appearance till, at least, 40 years after the Lues Venerea ; nor even at this day does it always accompany that disease.

* Naples was besieged in the year 1495, and this Venereal symptom was not observed till the year 1536.

“ viru-

“ virulent by cohabiting with women.
“ We need not, therefore, wonder that the
“ disease should have made its appearance
“ at Otaheite, and its neighbourhood, long
“ before the arrival of any European at
“ their isle.”

Several other observations, equally curious as interesting, are brought forward to establish his assertions. But why so new and so unparalleled an affection, after remaining so long dormant, should renew its vigour, and appear at so memorable an æra as 1493 ; memorable, it may be styled, with great propriety, from its being the year, that Columbus, the discoverer of a new and vast empire, arrived at Palos, a sea-port in Spain, amidst the unbounded acclamations of the gazing multitude, appear to me surprising and chimerical. Unless the learned broacher of this intricate doctrine can satisfactorily solve the above stated questions, his theory, though very ingenious, will never bring conviction to my mind ; nor are they competent to stand the test of mature consideration and reflection.

54 · INQUIRY into the ORIGIN

There is another remark we should mention, and which serves, in a great measure, to overthrow his arguments *in toto*—the name given to the disease by the inhabitants of those isles. The Otaheiteans called it *apano pretane*, or the British disease; and sometimes *apano miriatano*, or a disease of the penis *. This name seems to have been given it, by those Indians, in the period between Capt. Cook's first and second expedition. It does not appear clear, though the natives call it the British Disease, that it was first communicated to them by Britons, for these innocent and happy Islanders called every European British, owing, no doubt, to the very high respect and veneration they held every thing, the produce of our glorious Island. If it had been a distemper of long standing amongst them, they would have had some appellation, some expression of their own, to so baneful and destructive a malady, previous to their being discovered by Euro-

* *Apano*, signifying in the Otaheitean language, a disease, and *miriatano* the privy parts,

peans,

peans, which we are well informed, by the repeated testimonies of many, they had not*. Another strong circumstantial evidence to the contrary, is, the panic and despair it occasioned throughout those islands, where universal joy had been before spread; and their intire ignorance of it, before the French visited them, united with their unacquaintance of any remedy to counteract its malignity; for if it had been of long continuance among them, nature, who is always provident, would have lent her friendly aid to have alleviated its direful consequences.

† The sufferings of the first infected, amongst the Society Islands, are described by

* It appears plainly, from Hawksworth's account, they had no name at all for it at the time of the first Voyage, and distinguished it only by a metaphorical expression of the same import as rottenness. Vol. II. p. 233.

† The disease, according to the latest accounts, is much more violent in the Sandwich, than in the Society or Friendly Islands: it is reported to be so destructive at some of the former, as to be the death of many, of both sexes; in some of the Sandwich Islands only, it was at-

by the natives, in the most pathetic terms, to be insupportably grievous, and its rage not to be endured: they seem to be analogous to the sufferings of the first victims amongst Europeans, which we have had occasion to mention in a former part of this enquiry. It is very surprising that the Venereal Disease should increase in its virulence for years, after its being transplanted into a new and foreign soil. *Ex gr.* On its first appearance in Europe, it is allowed that it was very violent, for a century and upwards; but after that period it gradually diminished in the variety and violence of its symptoms. From this occurring, we have reason to believe, that it will observe the same revolution in the Islands of the Pacific Main, as it has hitherto done in

tended with those dreadful consequences; for at Owyhee, the largest of the whole group, (it observed a milder course) at which that persevering and adventurous commander, Capt. Cook, whose memory will ever be revered and esteemed, and whose loss will ever be regretted by every lover of science, fell a victim to savage resentment. But the naval genius of Britain bids us drop a tear at the recital of this unfortunate event.

every

every quarter of the universe, where it has been unfortunately introduced. It is not certain, what remedies are employed by the natives to dispel the fiend from those hospitable and delightful islands, which deserved a better return, as their benevolence is free from deceit, and their caresses the tribute of love and simplicity. We have indeed been lately informed, that their cure principally depends on the internal use of some certain plants, (the most general, and, indeed, the only remedy of nations in an uncivilized state) whose properties have not as yet been investigated*.

It does not appear improbable, but that they possess a specific power; for during

* With this remedy they use another of a very singular nature, and which seems unnecessary in a hot country. Having heated some stones, they lay a thick cloth over them, covered with a quantity of a small plant of the mustard kind, and over them is spread another cloth, on this they seat themselves, and sweat profusely. This method is likewise practised by them for the removal of other complaints, and particularly for the after-pains of child-bed women.

Cap-

Captain Cook's last stay at Otaheitee, none were to be seen in whom the disease had made any great progress, from the time it had been introduced among them, which was in 1768 or 1769. This was verified in one of the natives, who went from the Resolution infected, and returned in a short time to all appearance perfectly recovered; but whether radically so, their shortness of continuance at that Island prevented them from deciding. Repeated endeavours were made to ascertain the medicated qualities ascribed to these vegetables, but every attempt of this kind proved ineffectual; occasioned, in a great degree, to their unacquaintance of the idioms of the language peculiar to those islands. For it is a well established maxim, that the first steps to be taken towards the making any progress in discoveries in any country, is to procure a knowledge of their language*.

It

* Place a man, *e. gr.* in Lapland or Japan, possessed of every natural knowledge, a master of every human attainment; thus situated, and thus accomplished, what progress, what proficiency in their arts, manners, and customs,

It has been circulated, that mercury has been of late left in those islands, by the surgeons of the respective ships that have visited them; if so, it is much to be dreaded, but that all-potent mineral will not be judiciously administered; so that this remedy may be productive of as many evils amongst them, as the disease: and it does not appear, from the various accounts of voyagers, that they have either physicians, or surgeons by profession, except the priest, whose relief consists in prayers and ceremonies, not in drugs and prescriptions. Physic seems amongst them closely to be interwoven with the prevailing system of mythology; the sacred functions of the priesthood are combined with the practical duties of the physician.—Where intemperance produces no diseases, there will be no physicians by profession; yet where there is sufferance, there will always be an attempt to relieve; and where the cause of

customs, can he expect to arrive at, without a previous knowledge of their language, the medium through which these are transacted?

the

the disease and the remedy are alike unknown, these will naturally be directed by superstition: thus it happens in these islands, and in other countries, that groan under the united influences of ignorance, superstition, and oppression; and where that bright luminary, science, has never shone with that brilliancy which she does in enlightened nations.

It has been asserted, that the inhabitants of the South-Sea Islands, though afflicted with Lues, are yet free from gonorrhœa; and Dr. Duncan has produced this assertion in support of the following hypothesis, viz. "That the virus in gonorrhœa
" and syphilis are not the same; that the
" former never produces the latter, and
" *vice versa* *." The Doctor, in favor
of

* The opposite doctrine is, that the virus producing Lues Venerea, and that producing gonorrhœa, differ only in strength. From the weaker kind originates gonorrhœal symptoms. From that more concentrated, the Lues Venerea. It appears to me more probable, that the difference of these distempers arise from the manner in which the virus is applied, rather than from its different degrees of concentration—*e. gr.* The virulent

of his opinion, observes, that he was informed by a gentleman who accompanied Captain Cook to Otaheitee in 1774, that though the Venereal Disease, which had been lately introduced there, was very common among the inhabitants, yet that affection of it the gonorrhœa was still unknown to them. In contradiction to this information, I have to add the report of a friend of mine, who was on board the Adventure, during her voyage on discoveries, in a medical capacity, and was at that island much about the period alluded

to. The virulent mucus of the vagina being driven, or forced into the urethra in coition, attaches itself to the lacunæ, irritates and inflames them, and produces the gonorrhœal discharge.—But if the same poison, possessed of equal virulence, be applied to the glans, preputium, &c. an ulcer will be the consequence, which, in this state, we shall term a primary chancre, being only a local complaint: but if this chancre remain such a time, that the virus from it is absorbed into the general mass of fluids, and other symptoms follow, such as ulcers in the mouth, fauces, and throat, buboes, and other anomalous appearances, we would denominate these secondary, universal or syphilitic symptoms, or those arising from a tainted mass.

to

to, viz.—That the majority of the Adventure's crew, who were afflicted with this disease while at Otaheitee, had symptoms of gonorrhœa only. A later and very respectable authority seems to verify this last assertion; for Dr. Swediaur informs us in his excellent practical Treatise* on Venereal Diseases, that Captain King, who succeeded Capt. Clarke in the late voyage round the world, assured him, that he himself had seen many of them with matter dripping from their urethra. I must acknowledge, that his arguments have not brought conviction to my mind; nor do I imagine what is now thrown out, will by any means afford satisfactory evidence to those who may have adopted his opinion. It would, however, be a digression, and enlarging the bulk of these observations greater than what was first intended, were I to enter into a disquisition on this obscure subject; neither am I competent for a task of such uncommon difficulty, nor indeed are we provided with any experiments that can lead us in the least to decide this question; and if we
were,

Here, I cannot see any benefit that would arise from it in practice. It is enough that we are acquainted with a remedy, when judiciously administered, sufficiently powerful to destroy the effects of the virus, and cure the disease. I refer the curious to peruse the arguments which this learned gentleman has brought forward in favor of this doctrine, *in his medical cases and observations.*

I shall now finish my historical observations by remarking, that it has been my intention throughout, to destroy this false idea, that the Venereal Disease was known in the earliest periods of European history: on the contrary, I have attempted to establish, that the disease is of modern date, and introduced at the æra repeatedly mentioned; and that those distempers, which have been produced from authors of antiquity (as the *Arfura* of Ardern, &c.) in favor of it, were not Venereal, though similar to it in their appearances, but occasioned by these four causes—viz. 1st, luxurious living—2d, incontinency in the sexes—3d, want of cleanliness

cleanliness—4th, excessive hot seasons in cold climates, or a natural hot climate *. One or more of these causes combined,

* It is certain, that in hot countries the women have usually a very sharp, and, in a degree, a virulent discharge of the menses. In Syria, and in many other Asiatic countries, it has been remarked, that the menstrua have something contagious about them—And Tavernier (*Voyag. des Indes*) relates, that the women among the Caffres are of so virulent a disposition, at the period of their menstrual discharge, that if an European stand for any time near the urine they have lately made, will be often seized with head-ach, and sometimes with fever. Even in our milder regions, it not uncommonly occurs, that when a person has (unknowingly) commerce with women during this periodical effusion of blood, the glans and prepuce will be affected with superficial pustules, excoriations, and slight inflammations, which soon disappear: the best remedy for these appearances, is washing them with warm milk and water, or a weak solution of Goulard's extract of lead.—These symptoms have, I am fully convinced, too often been inadvertently taken for venereal: but complaints originating from this cause, are entirely analogous in their appearance, duration, and symptoms, to the disease we have had occasion to treat of at note p. 25.—These appearances may in general be imputed to the second and third cause,—viz. incontinency, and uncleanness.

have

have produced complaints, which, to their great resemblance to the Lues Venerea, have misled many. But that the disease in question is of a foreign extraction, generated in a foreign climate, and cannot be produced in this country, by one or all of the above, or from any other cause we are yet acquainted with, unless connection with an infected person. That it was a distemper peculiar to the climate of Hispaniola, and many other of the West-India islands, as different diseases are endemial to different countries—such, for instance, was the small-pox formerly in Egypt, and which did not make its appearance in Europe before the beginning of the seventh century, and was propagated throughout every kingdom in it by the Saracens. Its rapid dissemination and history, is equally as unaccountable as that of the Venereal Disease.

From the above observations a question naturally arises—Could the climate of *Hispaniola*, in the course of 300 years, have suffered so great a revolution, as to be capable

pable of producing Venereal Distempers at that period, and have no such effect at present, even allowing it to have been endemic and epidemic in that climate?—

We answer in the affirmative, setting out with a great saying of Aristotle's, and which is very much attended to in a late curious and valuable production of the learned Lord Monboddo, "every thing exists that is possible to exist." It is possible then, that a climate may undergo such a change, as to be capable of producing diseases at one time, that it is not at another.

The history of physic evinces us fully of the truth of this, and experience itself vouches for the power of particular climates, in causing particular diseases, and changing the constitution of men *.

For

* The changes which happen in climates, bear a strong affinity to those in the human body; for at certain times of life it is subject to diseases that it is not at others—*e. gr.* The diseases of infancy and manhood. Besides, there are a class of distempers that only affect mankind once during the period of their existence,
—the

For it is well attested, that the natives of some countries are liable to such diseases, as are seldom or never known in other countries. The *fudor* * *Anglicanus* is an instance of this—a disease which proved so fatal to our countrymen at different periods of our history; and which first manifested itself in the year 1485, in Henry the VIIIth's army at Milford Haven; from thence overspread the whole kingdom with the rapid progress of an epidemic.—Marvellous are the accounts which writers give of it.—They say that none but Englishmen were affected with it.—Even by going over to France they did not escape it; and, which is still more astonishing, their neighbours the Scotch were free from it; and in the most distant parts of Europe, the English only were affected, and foreigners not affected in England. From the above strange relation, we have reason

—the small-pox, measles, and several others of the exanthematous kind.

* Friend's *Hist. of Physic*, vol. ii. p. 333, and Hume's *Hist. of England*, vol. iii. p. 330.

to imagine, that the cause of this unaccountable distemper was not to be attributed to any change or peculiarity at those periods, in the British atmosphere, but peculiar to the constitution of an Englishman, and pursued him through every quarter of the universe, where pleasure or business had led him. He was no where exempt from it; no asylum, no refuge, could prevent its assailing him. But why the English were alone subject to this disease, and its never appearing since in this island; or why Lues Venerea can be produced in the climate of Hispaniola, and the parts adjacent, and in no other quarter of the world we are yet acquainted with; and why the leprosy should be so very prevalent in this country about three centuries ago, and now hardly a vestige of it to be seen, are phænomena of equally difficult solution, and equally bewilder us in mazes of fancy and conjecture.

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V E N E R E A L D I S E A S E,
From its first APPEARANCE in EUROPE to these Times;
W I T H
GENERAL REMARKS on the present received MODES of
T R E A T M E N T.

IT has been an observation from time immemorial, that the greatest discoveries which have been made in medicine, and every other branch of science, were more the result of chance* than studied reflection; and that those arts and sciences, which have had reference to the wants of mankind, have been more rapid in their

* It is to accident we are solely indebted for the discovery of the peculiar virtues of the Peruvian Bark, as well as of many other valuable remedies.

progress, than those that have had pleasure solely for their object; and in proportion to their distresses, their invention has been racked in order to find out means to alleviate them. Upon this principle it may naturally be presumed, (which indeed happened) that the incessant ravages and devastation which the Lues Venerea committed on its first introduction into Europe, upon all ranks and degrees of men, excited their humanity, as well as curiosity, to search for the causes, or at least to know whether the ancients had taken any notice of it*. The violence with which it raged, called aloud for the interference of the

* By the introduction of the Venereal Distemper into Europe, the practice of physic certainly has received considerable improvements. From this it would seem, that we are only to be taught by the danger to which we are exposed. Hence the art of war was greatly improved by repeated sieges and battles, and every nation torturing their invention to find out new implements of destruction. So we find, that public calamities are often instrumental of great improvements in science.

magistrate,

magistrate *, as well as the assistance of the physician: while the latter was ransacking

* When the Venereal Disease made its appearance in Europe, it was looked upon to be a species of the plague, and was thought to spread its contagion by conversing with, or living together; and hence arose those laws, which *Astruc* mentions were enacted in France, for the better regulation of the infected. " Thus there is extant a decree in the acts of the parliament of Paris, bearing date the 6th of March, 1496, by which such as were infected with the disease, were prohibited, under pain of death, from conversing with the rest of the world, and obliged to retire into the suburbs of St. Germain, to places set apart for that purpose." The same precaution seems to have been observed in this island much about the same time; and provision was made for the public safety, in proportion to the prejudices each nation had conceived of this distemper; for at Edinburgh, we are informed, that the infected were expressly commanded by the magistrates and town-council, under a severe penalty, (though not so strict as the infliction of death on a non-observance of that order) to retire to Inchkeith, a small island situated in the middle of the Forth, until proper assistance was sent them.

In the year 1567, Lord Darnley, husband to Mary Queen of Scots, was seized with a new and dangerous distemper, the symptoms whereof were so violent and unusual, that though his life was in the utmost danger,

facking Galen and his Arabian commentators, in hopes to find in them some similar traces of the disease, the other was busily employed in enacting laws and forming regulations, either totally to prevent, or at least to abate the terrible inroads it daily made on the human species; but neither the industry of the one, nor the vigilance and activity of the other, were capable to check its career; it stood in defiance both of medical and magisterial interposition. The mineral and vegetable kingdoms were in vain searched into to discover, if possible, a remedy for the disease. The infected received no fur-

no proper remedy was known or applied; but after languishing some weeks, the vigour of his constitution surmounted its malignity. Bishop Lesly affirms that this disease was the French-pox. *Keith* 346, Note (6).

In that age, says Dr. Robertson, in his History of Scotland, Book IV. this disease was esteemed so contagious, that persons infected with it were removed without the walls of cities; and, on account of this distemper, Lord Darnley was carried to the Kirk of Field, strangled, and afterwards blown up with the house by gun-powder, on Sunday night, the 9th of February that year.

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ther assistance from medicine, than a palliation of their symptoms, which were procured by copious evacuations and topical applications.—Nothing, in short, that ingenuity could invent, or experience furnish, but what was administered—but to no effect.—At last, the attention of all Europe was called to look at that soil, for a remedy, from whence the disease originated.

As early then as 1508, guiacum was imported from South America, and eagerly introduced into practice, as the only medicine that was used by the natives in the cure of the Venereal Disease, and was said to eradicate it, without danger; and, therefore, was received with great expectations, as a preventative to mankind.—But whether guiacum merited the great praises that were then bestowed upon it, and was really employed by the natives, as its introducers wished to insinuate, or whether it might be capable of curing the distemper in that country, and not in Europe, we remain still very much in the dark about. It is not, however, an improbable circumstance, that

that this might be the case; for it has been represented, that the Indians of North America cure the disease with speed, safety, and success, and that without the least knowledge of mercury. Mr. Kalm, a native of Sweden, and Sir W. Johnson, who were long resident amongst those savage tribes, affirm, that they use the root of the plant lobelia *, in decoction †, with incre-

* Care should be taken not to make use of the lobelia longiflora, instead of the lobelia syphilitica, the former being of a much more acrid nature than the latter.

Vid. Characteri in Linnæi, Gen. Plantar.

† They take the roots of four, six, or more plants, either fresh or dried; then wash and boil them in a gallon and a half of water; of which decoction, the patient drinks every day, if his constitution will suffer it, a quart in the beginning, gradually increasing the dose till he can no longer bear the purging excited by it; then he leaves it off for a day or two, and if necessary, continues it again, till he is perfectly well. This method, in about a fortnight, or three weeks, at the utmost, puts a total stop to the distemper. The Indians not only drink this decoction, but they also wash and bathe with it the parts affected. During a course of this remedy, they confine themselves to a simple diet, especially vegetables; though, occasionally, as circumstances require, they are allowed to eat animal food.

dible

dible success in every stage of that malady. Nay, they even look upon the disease, as one to be the easiest dealt with; even though it be so inveterate that the patient is half rotten, and insupportable to be approached, he is in a very short time perfectly cured, without return, unless a fresh exposure to the same cause, or to his own inconsiderate debauchery. So quick is this sanative plant, in subduing the most virulent pox, that the negroes, both men and women, from the most shocking condition, in ten days time, were generally so well recovered, as to return to their respective employments, and continued afterwards perfectly sound.— It would certainly be an object of some considerable importance, to discover their method of cure completely; but this has not hitherto been attended to: we should suppose that it might be easily arrived at, by making trials of the various plants that are found in those parts, and particularly of such as the natives are known to make the most use of. But however well attested these reports may be, however great their autho-

authorities, they have all failed on repeated experiments, in accomplishing a cure in our hemisphere, when unassisted with mercury.

Whatever may be the reason of guaiacum proving effectual in the Venereal Disease in South America, at that period, and not in this country at any period, is difficult to say *; and whatever then might have been the remedy, it is certain that the same mode of cure, as adopted by modern Europe, is now universally embraced by them; and their whole dependance, like ours, in that distemper, is confined to mercury. It is probable, however, if so, much to be lamented, that the natives, in wishing to keep their ancient remedy a secret for their conquerors, whom they, with great justice, styled the tyrants of the world, have at last

* The only solid reason of its failing in this country, seems to be the difference of climates: but when we consider that we are possessed of such powers as are capable of heating the apartments of the sick to any degree of heat whatever, even to that of the region from whence the disease came, every objection on this head, must be satisfactorily answered.

lost

lost sight of it themselves. Or, perhaps, their keeping it a secret from the Spaniards, might be owing to some old tradition prevalent amongst them—to this purport—that if the remedy, which they possess, was once discovered to any but their particular states, the charm would be broke, and its powers, as a sovereign remedy, destroyed; on account of some such superstition (so common in unenlightened nations) the world, very possibly, has been deprived of a most invaluable medicine. We might reasonably have expected, amongst the numberless discoveries of their customs and manners, that more attention would have been paid by the missionaries, and other priests, who were sent over by the court of Spain, to the fully investigating this subject, particularly as their health and pleasures were both so materially concerned.

We have certainly them alone to blame for our being so little acquainted with the original history and cure of this distemper; they neglected embracing the only opportunity of having a more accurate knowledge
of

of it, when this vast country was first discovered.

The reason, however, appears evident—they followed the foot-steps of their co-adventurers, whose chief object, as a celebrated Northern writer observes, “ was in
“ amassing fortunes, that they might
“ quickly return from a remote unhealth-
“ ful country, which they considered as a
“ state of exile *.”—Consequently their attention, their meditations, were more engaged in the mines of Potosi, than in the forests of Loxa.

China-root and sarsaparilla, were, likewise, introduced into practice much about the same time; and thirty years after guaiacum. The former of those was first brought by some Chinese merchants to Goa, the capital of the Portuguese settlements in the East Indies, in 1535, and from thence it was soon imported to all parts of Europe. Vesalius is the first who takes any notice of its virtues, in his epistle *De Radice Chincæ*; in speaking of it, he observes, that while he

* Robertson's History of America.

attended

attended the hospitals at Venice, under the principal physicians of that city, this root was then made use of in that disease, and great things were expected from it; but in that they were deceived, for it merely answered the intention of a sudorific, and procured a temporary relief of the symptoms which again appeared on the slightest irregularity. But a very fortunate circumstance occurring, recovered the lost reputation of this medicine; and its virtues were again, for a time, established, by no less a character than the imperial Charles the Fifth, who, on account of a violent gouty affection, the remains of a Venereal complaint improperly treated, had gone through a compleat course of guiacum, both in decoction and in substance, without any alleviation of his misery: at last, on his own accord, and contrary to the approbation of his physicians, determined to make trial of the efficacy of this root at Brussels; and though not perfectly cured of his distemper, found himself so much relieved from its use, that it was afterwards esteemed

a panacea all over the continent. But how changeable is the fortune of a new medicine, which was truly exemplified in the China-root, for it again fell under its former disgrace.—Sarsaparilla and sassafras suffered the same revolutions in their respective reputations, as guiacum and China-root had experienced before. Sometimes they were eagerly introduced by practitioners, and at others entirely neglected; in short, their changes were alternate, depending as much on the whim and caprice of fashion, as on the credit and fame which their respective introducers supported in the world.—Every vegetable that could be thought of, either the produce of those, or more distant climes, and esteemed the least efficacious, were employed; but none of these, upon experience, were found to answer, by any means, the high encomiums which had been bestowed upon them: they lost all the reputation they had ever acquired, only palliating the disease for a time, which, on the least irregularity of the diseased, broke out a fresh, with additional violence, and baffled

baffled all their hopes of ever accomplishing a perfect cure. At last, a remedy, which they so fruitlessly sought after in the learned volumes of antiquity, the Chemist's found in mercury, the favourite subject of so many of their operations. But at what period this all-potent mineral was first recommended in Venereal distempers; or who its introducers were, has afforded matter for much discussion. The greatest authorities * seem uniformly to agree, that it was not employed before the year 1518, which was twenty-five years after the disease had manifested itself; when John de Vigo †, physician to Pope Julius the Second,

* Friend's Hist. of Physic, Vol. II.

† It must create our astonishment, when we consider the analogy between some of the symptoms of the leprosy, (a disease very well known at that time in Europe) and the Venereal distemper, that mercury was not thought of before; and that a period of twenty-five years should elapse, before it was administered for this disease. For we are informed, that as early as 1276, this remedy was used in the leprosy, by Peter the Spaniard, who was afterwards created Pope John the First. He is acknowledged to be the first European, who made use of it in

Second, wrote a treatise on the Venereal Disease, wherein he recommends mercury in form of ointment, with which all the body was to be anointed: this desperate remedy, agreeable to his account, cured the disease in a week, by producing a violent salivation.—He likewise describes a mercurial cerate, for the same purpose, the good effects of which he had experienced a thousand times, and was more easy to the patient than salivation; more secure in its operation, and in the event, equally as effectual: but the mode of preparing or using those medicines, he takes no notice of.—The honour of ushering in this medicine has likewise been attributed to Jacobus Carpus, a contemporary of Vigo's; but whoever of them deserves that credit, they were both very successful in their practice at Rome, and acquired large fortunes; particularly the latter, who, at his death, be-

medicine; and he, no doubt, must have learnt the mode of using it, from the Arabians, who were the first that ventured to employ mercury to destroy vermin, and for foulness of the skin.

queathed

queathed 40,000 crowns, besides a great deal of other personal effects, to the Duke of Ferrara, his friend and patron. But whether this mode of administering mercury died with them, or if they were as successful as has been represented, we are not informed.—It is, however, certain, that mercury got into great disgrace after their death. It was never universally known in their time, owing to their keeping it so great a secret from the rest of the practitioners on the Continent, prevented them from using it, as a remedy, in the Lues Venerea. Mercury was first employed by practitioners, in the form of ointment, in this disease: and so timid were they in using it, that the proportion of mercury was scarce one-fortieth part of the other ingredients. In this they acted like honest men, in employing, with caution, a remedy of such a problematic nature, in a distemper, of which the annals of medicine had not at that time taken any notice of. But they carried their pusillanimity to too high a pitch; for by prescribing it in such trifling

quantities, the disease gained so much ground, that three-fourths of their patients were either carried off by the violence of the disease, before the medicine could have any effect; or were otherwise very much disfigured, that they became so offensive and disagreeable, as to be shunned and excluded society. The regulars being so often disappointed in accomplishing a cure, that at last the disease was entirely deserted by them, and got into the hands of the empirics. The desperate and mutilated state of those unhappy victims, opened a fine field for those rapacious pretenders, to impose upon the credulity of the people. In all countries, indeed, it is too often to be lamented, that desperate diseases are left to that set of men who have no characters to lose, and who will not stop in employing any remedy, however uncertain, or however violent, in order to attempt a cure. In this, no doubt, they sometimes succeed; but in the disease in question, they run into the opposite extremes of the regular practitioners; and
by

by throwing in such large quantities of mercury, produced such sudden and violent salivations, that more fell a sacrifice to the remedy than the distemper; insomuch that scarce one of a hundred, who went through the mercurial course, as prescribed by them, was completely cured; the disease, for the most part, returning with redoubled violence, which commonly carried off the unhappy sufferer, and relieved him of his misery.

The fatal effects which constantly followed the administration of this mineral, as recommended in the early periods of the disease, occasioned its being, if not wholly rejected from practice, at least, in a great measure laid aside, for near half a century; and the different roots, such as *China*, *Guaiacum*, &c. were again ushered into practice; but met with (as might be expected) the same train of ill-success which we have remarked before. Practitioners observing this, and taking it seriously into consideration, they a second time ventured upon the use of mercury; and being aware of the rock which their predecessors and the em-

pirics had split upon, were determined to employ it, neither with the caution of the one, nor in the rash inconsiderate manner of the other; and by adopting this rational plan, they succeeded, after many vain and fruitless attempts.

Mercury is employed at present in a great variety of forms, difference of opinions prevails with regard to the mode of administering its numerous preparations*. The advocates

* Dr. Kirkland † is of opinion, that the more simple the preparations of mercury are, the better; that exceedingly small doses of them continued a length of time, are fully sufficient to answer as an anti-syphilitic, and for every other purpose in which it can be useful; and that large and active doses of this mineral are not only unnecessary, but often violently pernicious, though they may produce a speedier relief from the disease; yet their subsequent consequences are more destructive to the constitution than the malady itself. The Doctor farther says, that he is inclined to believe, from a successful practice of many years, that small doses of mercury adds to its efficacy.

The preparation which the Doctor has been in use to administer, and speaks highly in praise of is—a scruple of quicksilver, rubbed down with two

† London Medical Journal, Vol. vii. Art. 1. for 1786.

vocates for each, assigning their reasons for that which they adopt in preference to any other.

drams of starch, then made into a mass with mucilage of gum arabic, and divided into twenty pills, two of which are to be taken daily, except in those days which the bowels are opened—for he recommends a gentle purge to be given weekly during the cure, (if the medicine has not that effect) in order to prevent the mouth from being affected. This course (the Doctor says) persisted in for three or four months, will cure every instance of Lues Venerea. This manner of proceeding may certainly succeed in cases where the disease puts on a mild appearance, or where there is any aversion in the constitution to mercury, when the smallest dose of the most gentle preparation, produces the most disagreeable effects. But were we to trust to this mode of administering mercury, where the distemper has laid deep root in the system, or where parts of consequence are in danger of being destroyed, our patients would be in a sad disfigured state, before the violence of the disease could possibly be checked. The Doctor wishes to avoid an appearance, which of all others, in my opinion, is anxiously to be looked for—that is an affection of the mouth. For we can assert from practice, that Venereal Ulcers will frequently not put on a healing appearance until the mouth becomes sore: and I have seldom found, that patients were perfectly free from a relapse, who were cured without some

other. It is, however, certain, that different preparations of this medicine, and different modes of using it, suit different temperaments; for it is well known, that very great varieties, in the operation of mercury, arise from peculiarities in constitutions. Some, for example, are easily affected * with this mineral, while others, on the contrary, are acted upon with difficulty only. It is most agreeable to some affection of the mouth; and that those persons are commonly longer in getting rid of the disease, where this appearance is with difficulty produced. In general we would presume, that to support a gentle soreness in the mouth and gums, during the exhibition of mercury, is advisable. From these circumstances it would appear, that there is a kind of connection between the state of the salivary glands, and the Venereal irritation; and that inflaming these glands to a certain degree, and for a certain period, (like cutting upon a node) will destroy the Venereal irritation: or perhaps, the affection of the salivary glands by mercury, is no further connected with the Venereal virus, than as it shews as a mercurimeter, the degree of mercurial stimulus in the system.

* One grain of mercury will do more for one man than fifty with another. I have been told of a lady who was salivated by taking a quarter of a grain of calomel only.

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constitutions to take it internally, in form of pills, bolusses, &c. and to others, whose intestines are very irritable, and easily acted upon, in form of ointment to be applied to the extremities. Therefore this Herculean remedy must be administered in such a manner, as best agrees with the age, constitution, and condition of the patient, as the judgment of the attendant practitioner shall suggest; who in every case will make choice of that preparation, and of that mode of application, as they think most conducive to the benefit of their patients.

Previous to the administration of mercury in any form, the following particulars ought to be taken into consideration. Whether our patient is affected with any putrid, nervous, or inflammatory complaints, &c. In all these cases, the use of mercury does not only prove hurtful, but in several instances, where its use has been persisted in, even fatal. Therefore attention to the removal of these disorders, ought to be previously paid to the use of this mineral. But, indeed, there is an allowable exception to this rule; for if the Venereal symptoms prevail

prevail much, though the patient is afflicted with one or other of the above complaints, and the soft parts in danger of being consumed, particularly those of the mouth, an immediate recourse to mercury is indispensably necessary, but proper medicines suited for the removal of those affections ought to be conjoined with it.— If the patient's strength is much exhausted from any preceding illness, or if he is naturally of a weakly delicate constitution, a healthful country air, with ass's or cow's milk as it comes from the animal, are one of the first requisites to be attended to, before a mercurial course is ventured upon. The milk likewise of a healthy woman is found to be one of the greatest restoratives for enfeebled and debilitated patients. His diet in other respects, should consist of whatever is of light and easy digestion; he may drink occasionally a few glasses of any generous aromatic white wine, as madeira, old hock, calcavello, &c. Riding on horseback two or three hours a day will greatly assist the above regimen, by enlivening

enlivening the spirits, and otherwise giving firmness and agility to the whole body. If medicines are required, they should be of the tonic kind, such as Peruvian bark, vitriolic elixir, &c. If he is low-spirited, which oftener occurs in Venereal Distempers than we are aware of, particularly with those whose constitutions we have been delineating, preparations of iron, with that powerful vegetable tonic the bark, has been found an excellent, and indeed the only remedy: these, with cheerful company, will greatly contribute to recover the strength, and recruit the spirits necessary for enabling the patient to bear the use of mercury. But it not uncommonly happens, that weakness and low-spiritedness are the immediate consequences of the Venereal poison lurking in the habit*. In a case of this

* I had lately an instance of this—An amiable young lady contracted a Venereal complaint from her husband, above a twelvemonth before she consulted me, and went then through a mercurial course, and was thought perfectly cured. About eight months after, she found herself extremely weak and much debilitated,

this description, mercury will be the only strengthener, and its use ought not to be delayed a moment. If, however, the patient enjoys a good state of health, no preliminary method, in my opinion, is required. Astruc recommends a long and tedious preparative process, even to patients otherwise healthy, and to which few of our modern patients would, or have any occasion to submit to: Sydenham, on

bilitated, her appetite entirely gone, lowness of spirits, accompanied with religious horrors, a dreadful, though not an unusual symptom in this hydra. I put her under a course of Peruvian bark, with valerian, steel, and other nervous and tonic remedies, as generally recommended in those complaints. She continued their use for some time with great attention, but to no effect, the disease rather increasing. I then thought it was requisite (being acquainted with the history of her case) to try a mercurial course, imagining that those appearances were in consequence of the silent ravages the Lues Venerea commits on the constitution, without any apparent characteristic of the disease being present; which really fell out as I suspected: for in about a month's time, her appetite, strength, and spirits were restored; and by persevering a few weeks longer in this treatment, she now enjoys a state of perfect good health.

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the other hand, reprobates all preparative methods; and in his *Epistola secunda Responsor de Morb. Vener.* asserts, that they should always be omitted as injurious. But as Venereal practice (much to the honor of modern physic) is so much altered and improved since the periods of these two great authorities, their opinions relative to the treatment of the distemper, is nearly become obsolete.

The next thing to be considered, is the proper season for entering upon a course of mercury. It has been a general observation, that the Venereal Disease yields easier to a good treatment in warm and dry climates and seasons, than in cold and damp ones: this is the reason, that has rendered Montpellier so famous for curing the most obstinate and confirmed Lues*: this is likewise the reason, that people who are not cured of Venereal complaints in the northern parts of Europe, are sometimes cured by removing to the dry fine air of the South of France, Italy, and Portugal.

* Swediar on the Venereal Disease.

Were we always able to chuse a season, the spring and autumn ought equally to be preferred to the scorching heat of summer, and the chilling cold of winter, provided the circumstances of the case will admit of delay, otherwise no attention is to be paid to season. The coldness of the season, &c. may be remedied by confinement to the house, and the heat regulated agreeable to the feeling of the patient; but if his business or circumstances of life oblige him to go out in cold damp weather, he should pay the strictest attention to his clothing, and constantly wear under his shirt a waistcoat of calico or flannel, and by all means to avoid wet feet.

It is now universally allowed, that mercury is the only remedy in the Venereal Disease; but what its operation is, or how it cures the disease, has been long a point undiscussed, & *sub judice lis est*. A question, therefore, naturally arises—How it acts on the Venereal virus? Whether by destroying its quality, or, by producing an evacuation,

evacuation, expelling it out of the system? Each of these opinions have had their respective votaries. Among those who rather adhere to the latter, is the learned and ingenious Dr. Cullen, who supposes, that mercury acts as a universal evacuant, which changes the whole mass of fluids, and evacuates in particular any foreign matter that may be mixed with them; and the shortest way, says the Doctor, in producing this effect, is probably by exciting a diaphoresis: as a proof of this, he introduces in his Lecture on Syphilis, the following very interesting medical anecdote.

* “ An officer, being in a campaign,
“ was afflicted with a Lues, insisted, in
“ view of battle, upon being immediately
“ freed from his disease: the regimental
“ surgeon, in compliance with his ear-
“ nest entreaties, anointed him at once
“ from neck to heel, using it to such a
“ quantity, as contained an ounce of

* Cullen's Lect. on Syphilis, in manuscript, 1776.

“ quicksilver

“ quicksilver in one night. The consequence was, that the patient broke out into a most profuse and continued sweat, which, in a few days removed all his symptoms. I will not vouch for the truth of this, nor do I propose it,” continues that admirable practitioner, “ for your imitation. If we may trust to it, it points out the good effects that are to be derived from using mercury, so as to support all the outlets; and this may be obtained, by employing acrid preparations of it, which promise to be good remedies. Hence we may account for the good effects of corrosive sublimate*, which, though a valuable remedy,

* My late worthy and ingenious friend Mr. Clare, applied this active and powerful mercurial preparation with the happiest success, in the form of a strong solution in water, on the palms of the hands, and soles of the feet; with a very gentle degree of friction on either of these surfaces, the medicine is readily absorbed, and presently shews its effects on the system.

By this mode of application, its deleterious action on the stomach and bowels is completely avoided, and the efficacy

“ dy, is not so effectual with us, as has
“ been represented by Van Swieten, and
“ its first introducers into practice. Pro-
“ bably its failure in many cases; may
“ have been owing to its determination to
“ the skin being checked by the patient
“ exposing himself to the cool air, whilst
“ he was under a course of that medicine;
“ and, therefore, if the cure be attempted
“ with that preparation in cold weather,
“ without confinement, we may be dis-
“ appointed.”

This medicine we also imagine may fail from some peculiarities of temperament, which hinders it from affecting the skin—as we know there are some people in whom it is very difficult to promote perspiration. However much this medicine may be held in disesteem, there are many instances on record, where it has been given with strong decoctions of sarsaparilla and mezereon,

efficacy of the remedy is no ways impaired—circumstances of considerable moment in practice, and lead us to form a very favourable opinion of this novel manner of employing it.

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under a strict observance to a low diet, and with confinement to the house, and keeping warm, have removed the most stubborn Venereal complaints, where every other remedy had failed. Practitioners of late have preferred the milder preparations of mercury to this acrid one, on account of the violence of its nature; even when joined with opium, it produces effects of the worst kind, such as griping, purging, head-ach, &c. for which reason it is now almost totally laid aside: however, I have seen it employed with great success in Venereal eruptions of the skin, and in deep seated ulcers. I rather apprehend its failure is more owing to the injudicious mode of prescribing it, than any fault of the medicine itself. It ought never to be given to the weak and irritable, nor to those who are subject to pulmonic affections; but to the strong and healthy, the sublimate may be administered with great safety. The quantity to be begun with ought not to exceed one-sixth, or at most one-fourth of a grain a day, at the same time diluting largely with
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barley-water, decoctions of burdock, farsaparilla, &c *.

With respect to the operation of mercury on the system, I apprehend, that it acts not so much by evacuating the Venereal virus, as uniting with it chemically, and forming a compound whose properties are rendered perfectly innocent, and entirely differing from, and independent of the qualities which either of the substances possessed before their union; and which afterwards may either remain for a length of time in, or be expelled the system. This theory of its operation seems to be the most rational of any yet fabricated.—For was it to pass off by the skin,

* Two, three, or four grains of corrosive sublimate, (or according to circumstances) dissolved in a quart of water, makes one of the most elegant, and at the same time most efficacious injections in a Venereal Gonorrhœa, of any we are acquainted with. For this purpose it far excels the boasted preparation of lead, copper, &c. which have all been so highly extolled in that discharge. For the above most excellent injection, I am indebted to Mr. Blizard, whose long and successful trials of it, confirms the encomiums we have been bestowing upon it.

a preparation of antimony would answer the purpose more effectually—Was it to be expelled the system by the intestines, we are provided with much better purgatives.—Or did its good effects depend on an increased secretion of saliva, tobacco might equally answer that intention. I flatter myself, that this theory will appear to be well grounded, on the consideration, that mercurial applications will cure local affections. By advancing this doctrine, we would perhaps be able, not only to account for a few grains of mercury relieving sometimes the most excruciating pains of the bones; but also why mercury, taken internally, removes Venereal Ulcers without any external application.

In exhibiting mercury, one material circumstance is to be attended to—the quantity to be introduced; this has likewise been a subject of debate. If we admit, that it has the power of uniting with the virus, wherever it meets it, and destroying its deleterious qualities, it ought not to be given in such proportions, as to be

be expelled the system by purging, immoderate sweating, nor by an increased secretion from the salivary glands.—Salivation therefore, but under certain circumstances which we shall presently speak of, should always be avoided, being undoubtedly a tedious, cruel process, and unnecessary for the cure, both from *Analogy* and *Experience*.

From *Analogy*—If mercury is administered in such a quantity, as to pass off by any of the different excretories of the body, we are disappointed in our expectations: *ex. gr.* We exhibit Peruvian bark for the cure of intermittents: if it is carried off by stool, we add opium to prevent its purgative effects. Therefore we give mercury with a view, that its action should destroy the effects of the Venereal Poison, by a species of attraction, which takes place between them in the body. It is evident then, that the more mercury we can have to remain in the system, in a given time, until the virus is sufficiently saturated, the more certain shall we

be in destroying it. It should, therefore, be exhibited in such a manner, and in such quantities, as to produce one or the other, of the following appearances. 1st, A hardness, fulness, and a moderate frequency of the pulse.—2dly, Fetor of the breath, with a soreness of the mouth and gums*.—

Or

* As soon as the mercury affects the mouth of the patient, or occasions an acceleration of the pulse, we are sure of the most essential point, viz. of its having entered the circulation, which is absolutely necessary for destroying completely the poison lodged there. However, I have often seen this mineral cure Venereal Distempers, without either producing soreness of the gums, fetor of the breath, or any sensible alteration or effect whatever in the system.

But these appearances are satisfactory and excellent guides to steer by, and in general ought devoutly to be wished for. The disappearing of internal Venereal Symptoms, and more so of external ones, is another not unequivocal sign, that the mercury has exerted its action on the Venereal Virus. If Venereal Ulcers, which arose from an infected mass, begin to heal, if pains of the bones begin to vanish, under the use of mercury, we are sure of its having removed the effects of the Venereal Poison; but we cannot yet ascertain, that every particle of this poison present in the body, is totally eradicated. In order to remedy this inconvenience,

Or 3dly, an abatement of the symptoms, without any of the preceding phænomena. We are possessed of no other criteria, whereby we can judge of the quantity of this mineral to be depended upon. Therefore, any one of these appearances is a sufficient and satisfactory test, that the system is under the influence of mercury. When we have got any one of these characteristics of its operation, there is no occasion for pushing it any further; since the supporting any one of them, for a few weeks, will carry off most instances of Lues, and even those that are pretty extensively diffused over the system.

From *Experience*—This will warrant me in asserting, that the evacuation produced is often an obstruction to the cure; for mercury cures sooner, and with greater certainty, when the strength is but little, than when it is much reduced by it: hav-

venience, the use of mercury ought to be persisted in for at least two or three weeks, (according to the virulence of the disease) after every Venereal Symptom has entirely disappeared.

ing several times bore testimony of the failure of salivation, in curing the disease, and when it was administered in such a manner, as to produce one or other of the above appearances, with as little sensible evacuation as possible, succeed.

In whatever manner or form we are determined on to administer mercury, salivation ought to be guarded against. For however strongly its advocates may reason in favor of it, it is erroneous to imagine, that by salivation all the poison is carried off, and the disease by that means radically cured, just the contrary effect takes place. It is true, indeed, that if salivation is brought on, the patient will often find all his symptoms disappear, and of course be induced to think himself cured; but some months, nay, sometimes only a few weeks afterwards, the symptoms will return with increased violence. No doubt, but if the disease is of a slight nature, it may by this method be eradicated; yet, from repeated observations I may venture to affirm, that those cures affected by salivation,

tion, never can or ought to be depended upon.

The means of preventing salivation, may be comprehended under the following heads,—1st, By beginning with mercury, in small doses, and increasing it gradually, until there are evident marks of its having entered the circulation; and when these occurrences take place — by intermitting the use of mercury until they cease.—2dly, By avoiding exposure to cold or damp air, particularly at night.—3dly, By indulging the patient with a free and generous diet, and a moderate use of wine, if he is not naturally of a phlogistic habit.

By a careful observance of the foregoing rules, I think it is in general not very difficult to avoid salivation, and which few cases that are truly Venereal, however obstinate, can withstand.

In the following situations, however, salivation seems inevitable.—1st, In persons who are naturally very irritable, or such as are rendered so by repeated courses of mercury, in whom the smallest dose, exhibited

exhibited in any form, immediately affects the mouth, and if persisted in for two or three days, produces salivation.—2dly, In those, when the disease is gaining much ground, and proceeding so fast, that the soft parts are in danger of being destroyed, and the patient cut off, or at least disfigured, by the violence of its effects.—In this case it would be extremely hazardous, to wait till its baneful influence is checked by the remedy administered in such a way as to avoid salivation.—3dly, In others again, where we cannot trust to their using it regularly. Many have objected to this last reason for employing salivation, in order to rid the patient of the disease, but with what propriety I cannot see, though perhaps I am as great an enemy to this mode of cure as any of its avowed ones; yet when we have got people to deal with, who are irregular in using what is recommended, and otherwise very inattentive to their health, even when the disease is making rapid progress in their constitutions.—Under these circumstances,
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after we have in the strongest and most pathetic terms pointed out to them the impropriety of their conduct, and that their persevering in it will be the irremediable cause of bringing misery on themselves, and transferring it to those unborn, and perhaps of rendering them totally incapable of ever enjoying the pleasures of the marriage-bed : after we have strongly enforced these interesting particulars, and they still persist in this improper mode of proceeding, a respect for our own character, and, what is more, the love of humanity authorize, nay, oblige us to use this violent method of cure, not from any predilection in favour of it, but from mere necessity : as on the contrary, salivation rather renders the effect of the medicine doubtful, and in course ought to be avoided, unless in those situations we have been describing.

AMONGST

AMONGST the various remedies which have been recommended in Venereal complaints, opium, though often prescribed for them with no other purpose than merely to alleviate pain or lessen irritability, yet its possessing antivenereal qualities was novel, and never suggested before the year 1779; when the specific powers of this celebrated medicine were accidentally discovered by Dr. Frederick Michaelis, Physician-General to the Hessian troops; and the circumstances which led him to this discovery are related by him, as appear in the sequel*. “ A young gentleman, “ who, after having tried a variety of mercurial preparations for a most inveterate “ Venereal affection, gave up his business “ in New York, where he then resided, “ and went to England without hopes of “ recovery. He there took large doses of opium to ease his pain; its effects, however, “ surpassed his most sanguine expectations, “ for without using any other remedy, he

* Vid. London Medical Commentaries, Vol. I.

“ found

“ found himself perfectly cured within a
“ very short space of time. I no sooner
“ heard of this extraordinary recovery,
“ than I became desirous to ascertain
“ whether opium would have the same
“ effect, where no mercury had been given.
“ My trials, for this purpose, were pretty
“ numerous, and in general attended with
“ great success. They were made with all
“ the accuracy I was capable of. The
“ medicines were always given by the mates
“ of the hospitals, and I myself saw the
“ patient daily, and wrote down, upon the
“ spot, every change that occurred.—The
“ patients were so carefully attended to,
“ that I am certain they took the medicines
“ in the doses directed; and equally cer-
“ tain that they took no other remedy.”
—The above, with about twenty other in-
stances, the Doctor produces, to prove the
superior efficacy of opium over all other
remedies in this disease.—He very candidly
acknowledges, that it did not always suc-
ceed; but the proportion of the successful
cases, to those in which this medicine alone
did

did not effect a cure, was as three to one; and among those in which it failed, there were many in which mercury proved equally ineffectual.

--- The immense quantities of opium which he gave his patients are truly astonishing. He has frequently administered, from one grain, to two scruples at a dose, even to those who had never been accustomed to it; and which is very remarkable, these enormous doses often produced little or no sleep; and that if it had that effect at first, it generally went off in a short time. But in what manner this catholicon acts on the Venereal Virus, he does not attempt to explain: nor, indeed, has its effects, which it produces on the human frame, been thoroughly investigated, or observed with sufficient accuracy. It is, however, a prevalent opinion, that it diminishes every secretion, perspiration excepted. Opium, as far as it induces sleep*, renders us insensible of a moderate stimulus; and, per-

* Dr. YOUNG on Opium.

haps, many of the phænomena attending it, may be accounted for from this insensibility. Hence, perhaps, it is, that most of our excretions are abated, or interrupted at that time; we neither, *ex. gr.* cough, hawk, spit, sneeze, nor evacuate by stool or urine. It seems to be owing to this, that many of our secreted liquors, which, though thin when they arrive at the excretory ducts, yet by the remora there, in our sleep becomes thick: witness the wax in the ears, the mucus in our mouth, nose, fauces, and intestines, they are all thicker after a profound sleep, probably by remaining till the aqueous parts are absorbed or evaporated: and hence, perhaps, it is, that perspiration, which is excited without any stimulus, proceeds fully as well asleep as when awake; nay, probably better, on account of the other excretions being then lessened. But the experiments made by Doctor Michaelis, tend to confute this, and establish a contrary hypothesis, *viz*: That the large doses of opium, which he gave to his patients, instead of diminishing the secretions, had an

opposite effect, for most of them made more urine than ordinary: and another very extraordinary effect it produced, which to the Reader will appear to border upon the *incredible*—was now and then an increased secretion of saliva, sometimes amounting to actual salivation. Another symptom, the Doctor takes notice of, will appear equally so, was, its sometimes bringing on a most violent diarrhœa, particularly when great quantities of it were accumulated in the bowels *. In whatever manner opium operates on the system, it is not our present purpose to enter upon—suffice it to say, agreeable to the Author's account, it generally proved a sovereign remedy in the disease. But however well authenticated the above practice is, however respectable

* It seems to have been a constant rule with the Doctor, to bleed those patients of a plethoric habit, previous to their commencing a course of opium, and to evacuate the bowels, if there was any indication for doing so; it being well known, that it would be highly incongruous, in a judicious practitioner, to administer opium, when there were any impurities in the first passages.

and

and numerous the authorities * brought forward to support it, it has not been attended, by no means, either in our hospitals in town, or in private practice with that uninterrupted flow of success which its introducer has so strenuously asserted.

As far as ever I have been able to judge of the effects of opium in the Venereal Disease, have briefly been, as follows†.—

That

* Repeated successful trials of this medicine were made in the British hospital, at New York, by Dr. Nooth, Messrs. Grant, Beaumont, Forster, and Wier, surgeons. By Dr. Schopf, physician to the Anspach troops. In England, by Dr. Saunders of Guy's hospital; the result of the last Gentleman's experiments were not followed (as far as I can learn) with such a train of unequivocal success, as Dr. Michaelis has represented.

† Opium, applied either in a very fine powder, or a solution of it in water to ill-conditioned ulcers, whether arising from a Venereal or scorbutic taint, is, perhaps, one of the best remedies the whole practice of physic can furnish us with. The following instance, among the many I have been witness to, may serve to illustrate its efficacy in ulcers from the former cause. A Gentleman, 32 years of age, of a healthy robust constitution, consulted Dr. Turnbull and myself, about four or five months ago, for a large deep spreading ulcer, with hard

That large and continued doses of it, joined with mercury, administered in Venereal

prominent borders, extremely sensible to the touch, attended with a considerable acrid discharge, which gave him exquisite torture, and had covered, and was in danger of consuming the whole glans.—Under these alarming circumstances, mercury, both externally and internally administered, was had immediate recourse to, without the least effect, the ulcer continuing to spread and destroy the parts; but at last fortunately gave way to a strong solution of opium in water, with which it was frequently bathed throughout the day; at the same time he took from three to ten grains of the extract. thebaic. combined with merc. calcinat. — By pursuing this course, together with giving him the bark in large doses, at the end of a month he was perfectly recovered; but it was thought necessary to continue the medicine for three weeks longer, gradually diminishing the quantity of opium.

The circumstances of this case points out to us that what mercury alone cannot accomplish, may be effected by a judicious union of these two powerful remedies.— Another mode of using opium in ulcers, is, by means of vapour; this, joined with the vapour of camphire, has a most surprising effect on ulcers of a long standing.

A respectable Spanish surgeon first informed me of this method of applying opium to ulcers, when I was in that kingdom, about five years ago.—And I believe that it is not at present generally known, or practised in this Island.

affections

affections of the bones, which often occasion (particularly at night, when in bed) the most excruciating agony, are sometimes attended with the most salutary consequences.

That its principal effects are merely (as has been observed) First, To mitigate pain. — Secondly, To diminish irritability. — Thirdly, To prevent the stomach and intestines from being stimulated and strongly acted upon by saline mercurial preparations. These seem to be the only good purposes that are to be expected from the use of opium in Lues Venerea.

Future experiments, and time the grand finisher of all human events, must decide on this, as well as on every other subject. But the effects already observed, certainly justify us, in giving this new remedy a fair and candid trial, particularly in cases where mercury cannot be used with safety, or where it has been employed without effect.

F I N I S.

